



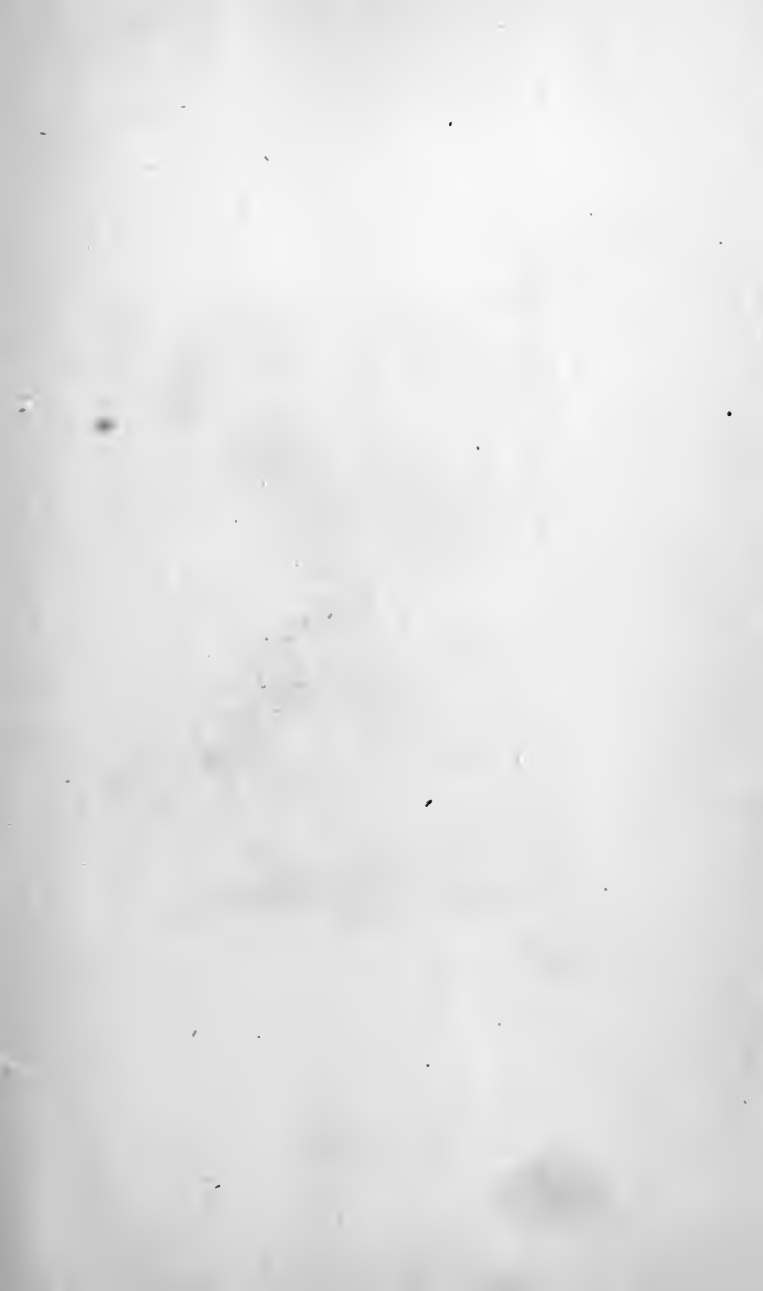


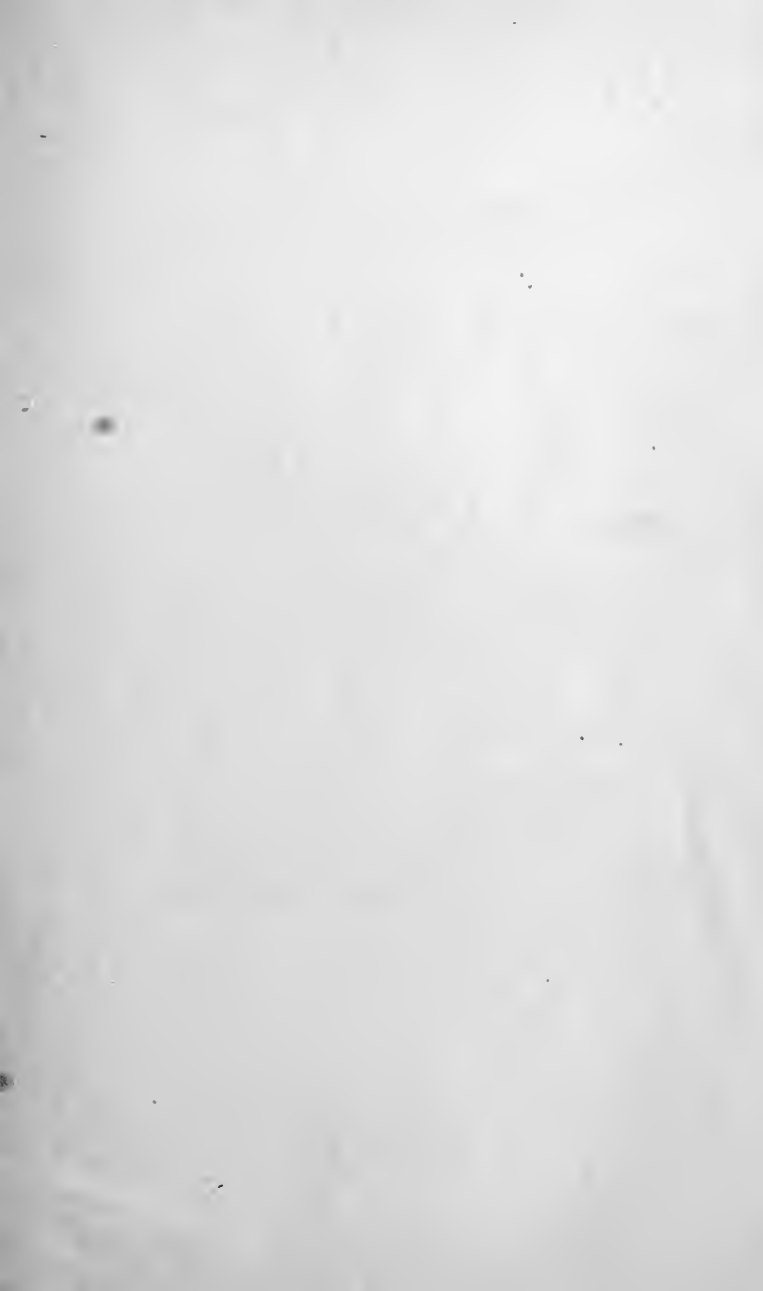
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An American Woman's Life and Work.

A MEMORIAL

OF

MARY CLEMMER

BY

EDMUND HUDSON



BOSTON

TICKNOR AND COMPANY

1886

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JOHN WILSON AND SON, CAMBRIDGE.

To the Beautiful Memory
OF
THE NOBLE AND GENTLE WOMAN,
POET, LOVER OF HER COUNTRY, AND
FOLLOWER OF CHRIST,
WHOSE MORTAL PART WAS LAID AT REST IN ROCK-CREEK
CHURCHYARD, WASHINGTON,
AUGUST THE TWENTIETH, 1884;
HER WORK UNFINISHED, HER LIFE ON EARTH
UNTIMELY ENDED;
*ONE TO WHOM SHE WAS DEAREST FRIEND
AND SWEETEST COMRADE*

Dedicates this Volume.

PREFACE.

THE new edition of the writings of Mary Clemmer, which this volume is intended to supplement and to complete, was determined upon very soon after her decease. It was at first proposed to issue a new volume of letters and sketches to be selected from her contributions to the newspaper for which she wrote. With this were to be included the novel "His Two Wives," the "Poems of Life and Nature," the "Outlines of Men, Women, and Things," and a brief memorial volume, — five volumes in all. This plan was changed when it became evident that a satisfactory account of her life and work could not be given without quoting very freely from her writings, and that it would

be advisable to add a number of essays and sketches to the "Outlines," while a few articles in that collection which possessed a greater interest when first published than at the present time could be omitted. The title of that collection has been changed to "Men, Women, and Things," and the volume has been brought out in new form, uniform with the other volumes, which now number four instead of five, as at first contemplated.

The novel and the volume of poems remain as they came from her hand. A few of her later poems which are not included in the collection of 1882 will be found in this volume. During the last year of her life she was unable to do much writing, and all of her poems written before 1883 which she cared to preserve appear in her own collection. Some poems written in her earlier years which have been sent to me by friendly hands have not been included here because she had, in making up her volume, deliberately omitted them.

In the publication of the present volume there has been unavoidable delay, for which the publishers are in no wise responsible. Engrossing occupations from which the writer was unable wholly to escape even for a single day have interfered with the proper performance of a duty to which all other engagements would have been gladly sacrificed. It is with a keen sense of inadequacy and of shortcoming that I have committed this volume to the press, asking for it the indulgent judgment of all who knew and loved Mary Clemmer. I am under obligations to many of her friends for materials of which I have made some use in these chapters; and they will know that the acknowledgment of this obligation is not lacking in gratitude if made in a general, and not personal, way.

The portrait which accompanies this volume is a reproduction of a photograph taken by Brady in Washington about five years prior to her death. There are other portraits more satisfactory to some who knew her, but per-

haps no one of them conveys so accurate an idea of her personal bearing; certainly there is none which seems to me to express so much character as this one.

E. H.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	7
II. FAMILY HISTORY.—HER FATHER'S HUGUENOT DESCENT.—THE CRAINES OF THE ISLE OF MAN.—EARLY LIFE IN UTICA.—MARRIAGE	22
III. PERSONAL TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS.—RELIGIOUS LIFE	46
IV. HER WORK IN LITERATURE AND JOURNALISM	66
V. FRIENDSHIPS.—PERSONAL RELATIONS TO VARIOUS MEN AND WOMEN	90
VI. LOVE OF COUNTRY.—EXPERIENCE DURING THE WAR.—EXPERIENCE AS A WRITER ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS	116
VII. DEVOTION TO THE WELFARE OF WOMEN.—THE SUFFRAGE AND OTHER QUESTIONS .	147
VIII. LOVE OF NATURE, EXPRESSED IN PROSE AND POETRY	163

CHAPTER	PAGE
IX. POWER TO DELINEATE CHARACTER. — PERSONAL DESCRIPTIONS OF PUBLIC MEN .	176
X. CONCERNING HER POETRY. — HOW IT WAS REGARDED BY HERSELF AND BY OTHERS	197
XI. THE VISIT IN EUROPE. — HER LAST ILLNESS. — DEATH	211
XII. THE FUNERAL. — ROCK CREEK CHURCHYARD. — SOME PERSONAL TRIBUTES .	227

AN AMERICAN WOMAN.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE preparation of this volume, recording as fully as may be the story of the life of MARY CLEMMER and of her work in the world, is not simply the performance of a sad duty of affection to one that is gone who should be here, although this motive, if there had been no other to inspire it, would have sufficed. Nor is it only a memorial of the warmly cherished friend and the admired and esteemed writer, put forth in obedience to the wishes of those who cherished and admired her. This also might have been held a sufficient reason for the publication of an adequate account of her. The number is not small of those who have warmly desired that Mary

Clemmer should be thus commemorated. But there is ampler justification for the volume here presented. She lived a consecrated life ; a life full of brave purpose, of high endeavor, of earnest and conscientious work, of patriotic and poetic feeling, of tenderness and self-sacrifice, of all womanly virtues and worthiness, — so that it remains a permanently useful and helpful life to all who are or may become familiar with it, — and because by making known all her qualities of mind and heart, all that she was as well as all she did, there will be revealed a noble and lovely human character and a fit representative of American womanhood, this book is added to the volumes which embody her literary work. No person who did not know her well can fully acquaint himself with the spirit which animated and controlled her, and the circumstances which mainly affected her life, without feeling an increase of respect and of admiration for one who fought her battle in the world so well, and put always

into all she did the very best that was in her. "Her soul seemed to me spotless," writes one who knew her long and intimately; and the words will not seem exaggerated to any who came within the charmed circle of her private and personal life.

There are many persons in the world to whom the thought of Mary Clemmer's death must always bring not only the feeling of personal regret and sadness, but a keen sense of wrong. How passionately she wished and prayed for continued life! She who had lived through so much of suffering and weariness and loss, and learned so well how to use to highest advantage of mind and spirit the days of rest; happiness, and peace that seemed to be before her, had won the right to live if any human being could be endowed with it. Once her strength had been spent almost entirely for others; but now at last the day appeared to be at hand when she could live her own true life untrammelled by intellectual or personal obligations of any sort.

She saw spread out before her a vista of serene and peaceful days in which she could do the things she wished to do, and be herself as happy as she wished those around her always to be. A hundred times before, the struggle and the suffering which fate had imposed upon her had so weighted down her soul that she would gladly have given up the effort to live, and gone willingly to another state of existence. Now, there remained no more the need of toil nor the exactions of compelling tasks to consume her days and her vitality, and to forbid the finer mental work she aspired to do. The privilege—the one privilege she had prayed for and trusted Heaven to give to her—of having “a few good years” before she died that she might use to develop the larger powers she felt she possessed, hung for a little while before her gaze like a vision of an earthly paradise, and then was torn away from the weary and disappointed eyes.

“I do hope my life work is not ended,” were her words spoken barely two weeks before she

passed away. They were spoken in a voice full of sad yearning for the opportunity to do that which she had aimed to do. But she was struck down midway in her career, in the full possession of all her powers, before she had done what she believed was to be her best literary work, and at a time when she cared most to live, and cherished the fondest hopes of the future. What she wrote of her loved friend, Alice Cary, might with equal truth have been written years afterward of herself:—

“When a dear one, dying willingly, lets go of life, the loosened hands by so much reconcile us to their going. It was not so with Alice. Through physical suffering almost beyond precedent, through days and nights and years of hopeless illness, she yet clung to this life; not through any lack of faith in the other and higher, but because it seemed to her that she had not yet exhausted the possibilities, the fulness, and sweetness of this. She thought that there was a fruition in life, in its labor, its love, which she had never realized; and even in dying she longed for it.”

That her life was thus cut short must be attributed wholly to the dreadful accident that befell her in January, 1878, when, being impressed with the belief that the horses behind which she was riding were uncontrolled by the driver and running away, she, in sheer fright, and having lost all self-command, jumped from her carriage into a Washington street. Her head was thrown with terrible force upon the stone curbing, and that she was not instantly killed was almost miraculous. Although it seemed for a time that she might recover from the effects of that concussion, yet the physicians' examination and her subsequent symptoms proved only too conclusively that there was a fracture of the skull at its base; and for such an injury medical skill was powerless to furnish a remedy. For three years previous to this accident she had suffered intensely from neuralgia in the face and eyes, brought on by overwork; and the terrific blow received when she fell from the carriage inevitably increased

the inflammation and the suffering that had before rendered her existence so painful. During the last years of her life the torture she suffered was excruciating and constant, and it was often a matter for wonder that she was able to use brain or hand at all. For months at a time she endured the keenest physical anguish. What she suffered, how she was depressed by her great pain, and how she still kept on hoping for a release from it, is well told in a letter written at Littleton, New Hampshire, in August, 1880, in which she said :—

“ I thought this morning, as the pang in my head woke me, that if some morning I could awake and find it gone, it would be as if I awakened in a new world and it was Paradise. Every day I cry : ‘ How long, O Lord, how long ! ’ Yet there is not a moment’s respite, day or night. I can be so conscious of nothing as of this excruciating pain in my head and eyes, for it makes almost everything else impossible. It is not *any place*, but *myself*, and no place yet has been able to alleviate the condition. While suffering so at the South I thought if I could only get North I would be better. I come North and

am no better. How can I help being discouraged? And yet I hope that some morning I shall awake and find again my old self. God only knows."

If it be considered that this account of her condition might have been written on almost any day of the last six years of her life, and that there was hardly a day during all that period when she did not at least try to do some literary work, the conditions under which she labored may perhaps be better understood by some who have wondered that she did not accomplish more in those years. To those who saw her from day to day and realized at the time how much she suffered, it seemed wonderful that she produced anything at all. Doubtless she should have rested wholly, and been free from all care, during the years immediately following the injury to her head; but there were several reasons that made this quite impossible, not the least of which was her solicitude for her venerated father, who gradually failed in health for a number of years prior

to his decease in 1881. Perhaps, however, her greatest incentive to mental effort was the fear which constantly haunted her that she might not be spared to do all she desired to do in the world. She had done much good work before she was prostrated in 1878; but all she had done was to her as nothing when she thought of what she aspired to accomplish and what she believed herself capable of accomplishing. She had written on public affairs and about public men while she felt the need of a steady income, but of that drudgery she had had more than enough. She had written the beautiful memorial of the Cary sisters, in which is embodied some of her best work. She had produced three novels, the second a marked advance upon its predecessor, and the last so well received that she had reason to feel high hopes of larger success in the field of fiction-writing. She had written poetry from her sixteenth year, which when gathered into a volume in 1882 was received with a greater

degree of favor than is often manifested for collections of poems, even of the work of some well-known poets, in these days. She had acquired a wide and remarkable knowledge of human life and of human nature, which she could have richly utilized in the novels to which she would have devoted her literary energies had her life been spared. Tempting opportunities for the publication of her literary handiwork were continually presenting themselves to her. Alas! they were all to be put aside unused. The verses she had written in a mood of sadness many years before, when life had still much in store for her, now only too accurately described what was to come:—

“A few more mornings, yet a few more mornings,
We'll watch the light's low dawning, dull and gray;
A few more mornings, and we'll faintly murmur
To those who love us, ‘'T is our latest day.’
From weary brows will fall the life-worn mask,
From tired hands will drop the half-done task.

“A few more mornings, but a few more mornings,
Others will take the work that we laid down, —

Will lift it where we left it in the shadows,
 Will bear its cross, perchance will wear the crown
 We sighed for, toiled for, all our fleeting hours —
 The crown of crowns, that never could be ours.

.
 “A few more morns, — ’t will all be told, our story,
 So sweet, so brief ! Why war with changeless fate ?
 Why cry for love ? Why spend our strength for glory ?
 Why pray to God with prayer importunate ?
 His centuries go ; we still must come and pass
 But as the shadows on the summer grass.

“A few more mornings, — then again in beauty
 The earth will wear the splendor of her springs ;
 While we, within the universe of spirits,
 Will wander somewhere among viewless things.
 Where’er it be, in all the heaven of air,
 We still must see our human home is fair ;
 Wondrous must be God’s gift to compensate
 For all we miss within our human fate.”

When thus fatally hurt Mary Clemmer had reached the age of thirty-eight ; yet her name had been prominently before the public as a writer for the press for so many years that some readers who did not know to the contrary had come to think of her as a person of much greater age. The popularity she had achieved

and the audience she had won chiefly through her journalistic work rightly entitled her to believe that there was in store for her a larger measure of success in the future, when, free from care and confining obligations, she could give to literature the free and devoted spirit of the true artist. A survey of the creative work of women in English literature will easily show that while some have become famous as writers before the age at which Mary Clemmer was so wounded and physically prostrated that steady application became impossible to her, yet that most of the good and enduring work of women in our literature has been done after authors have passed that age. When it is remembered that George Eliot was thirty-eight at the time her first story was published, that Mrs. Browning was married at thirty-seven and produced most of her best work afterward, that Mrs. Stowe was thirty-nine when she wrote "Uncle Tom," that Miss Alcott was thirty-seven when her first note-

worthy story was published, and that the lamented Mrs. Helen Jackson would hardly have been known in literature if she had produced nothing after her fortieth year, it will be realized how important to their reputations were the years of mature effort that constitute the period more commonly described in speaking of men than of women as that of "middle life." Of course there are notable exceptions, as in the case of Margaret Fuller, whose literary career may be said to have ended with her marriage at the age of thirty-seven; but the fact remains that most of the solid work of women in literature has been done after they have passed the age of thirty-seven or thirty-eight. There are few authors of either sex, who, when distinction and success have been won, have not wished to suppress and put away out of sight some of their earliest literary productions. If Mary Clemmer could have produced results in poetry and in fiction which satisfied her own ideals, it may have been that she would have

gladly dismissed as unimportant some part of what she had printed during the first years of her literary activity; but that she ever failed to put earnest effort and the most conscientious purpose into anything she undertook, no one who knew her would venture to assert. Whether her high ambition in literature could have been realized had her life been spared, it is not necessary or proper here to inquire. But those who stood nearest to her and felt most directly the splendid energy of soul and the noble intellectual purpose which animated her may be pardoned for cherishing the belief that opportunity alone was lacking to have secured for her a higher place in American authorship than she succeeded in attaining.

But enough of what might have been! And let it not be thought that it is intended even to suggest an apology for anything that she actually wrote or published. In the portrayal of a life so sincere, so courageous, so helpful and healthful as was hers, there will be found noth-

ing to be explained away or to be apologized for. No contributor to the American press has shown greater candor, truer courage, or a more patriotic spirit than she brought to her work; and few writers, even of the opposite sex, have been more influential. If as poet she did not claim to rank with the highest, it will not be denied that she showed natural power as a versifier, or that she expressed tender emotion, sensibility to the beauty of Nature, and deep religious feeling in metrical forms that were highly meritorious in the judgment of the more severely critical, and that possessed an abiding charm for many who could rightly claim a spiritual kinship with her. Her poetry was the expression of herself; and had she sought no other form of expression, she must still have made her place in American literature.

CHAPTER II.

FAMILY HISTORY. — HER FATHER'S HUGUENOT DESCENT. —
THE CRAINES OF THE ISLE OF MAN. — HER EARLY LIFE
IN UTICA. — HER MARRIAGE.

MARY CLEMMER felt an honest pride in her ancestry, and she had a right to this feeling. It often happened to her to be asked from whom she inherited her splendid physical organization and her mental gifts. She was never slow in acknowledging the large measure of physical and mental endowment which came to her directly from her parents, to whom her devotion was ever most affectionate and loyal. They transmitted to her not only an honorable name and the example of virtuous and worthy lives, but qualities of mind and heart which had been developed through a long and honorable ancestry. In looking through the family

history it appeared to her and to her friends that her relation was especially close and her obligation exceedingly strong to the two grandmothers, only one of whom she ever saw, whose characters seem to have been remarkable for their force and efficiency, and who were unquestionably women of unusual intelligence and power. From them she inherited that high and indomitable spirit which distinguished her whole life, and that earnestness and benevolence of nature which made her such a strong force in the lives of so many others. Barbara Schelley, whose name she always wished she might have had, and Margaret Craine were two notable women. Perhaps in giving the facts of her family history it will not be amiss to quote from an excellent article in a volume entitled "Our Famous Women" (1884), contributed by Miss Whiting, as the statements there made are sufficiently full and accurate.

"Her father, Abraham Clemmer, a native of Pennsylvania, was of Huguenot descent. Her mother,

Margaret Kneale, was born in the Isle of Man. The Clemmer family trace their origin to Alsatia. Their name in the Fatherland was spelled Klemmer. In 1685, when Louis XIV. pushed his persecutions of the Huguenots past the borders of France into the very heart of Germany, the Clemmer family were among the million Huguenots who then fled from their native soil to seek refuge in strange lands. They settled in Berks County, Pennsylvania, before the American Revolution. Jonas Clemmer, the father of Abraham Clemmer, an educated man, a teacher by profession, died when his son was but five years of age,—his death changing the entire earthly destiny of his child.

“The mother of Abraham Clemmer, born Barbara Schelley, came also from Huguenot stock. The male members of her family for many generations had been practitioners of medicine or professors of medical science. Her brothers were educated as physicians, and their sons to-day are practising physicians in the State of Pennsylvania. She, a girl, denied the liberal education bestowed upon her brothers, possessed in no less degree than they the instinct of healing. With none of the training that bestows a college diploma, she became famous in the country surrounding her home for her knowledge of medicines, her skill in using them, and in healing the sick. A woman of magnificent constitution, of great force of character, of profound sweetness of

disposition, she died in the homestead in Pennsylvania, where she lived from her youth, as late as the year 1873, aged eighty-two years.

“The early death of his father, with the burden that death cast upon his mother of caring for a growing family, were together the causes which denied to Abraham Clemmer the liberal education, the thorough mental discipline, which, up to his time, had been the birthright of his family.

“The mother of Mary Clemmer (born Margaret Kneale) came from the Isle of Man. This little island, in the storm-tossed Irish Sea, has an importance wholly disproportionate to its geographical extent. It has a government of its own, a House of Parliament, a people descended through generations of noble blood, a striking and eventful history. In Hawthorne's ‘English Note-book’ he has recorded his impressions of the historic spot; and from its scenery and romantic traditions Scott collected his material for ‘Peveril of the Peak.’ The island history dates back to the time that the Norsemen were mighty in the West.

“Wordsworth's famous line, —

‘The light that never was on sea or land,

is in a poem that was ‘suggested by a picture of Peele Castle in a storm.’ Just outside the ramparts of that castle Margaret Kneale was born, and under its ancient archways she played through all her

childhood. The influences of this spot entered into her life, and have flowered into consciousness in the life of her gifted daughter.

“The Isle of Man lies in a temperature that fosters a wonderful beauty and luxuriance of Nature. Fuchsias grow and mass their scarlet blossoms ten and twelve feet high. The mist-crowned heights shine sun-touched and fair above the purple defiles of rocky valleys over which foam-crested cascades rush, tumbling into the river below. An old legend runs that the isle had once a wizard king who enshrouded it with vapor. Here King Harold Harfager reigned, and here the Vikings held their sea-throne. Myth and legend have vanished now. The island is only seventy-five miles from Liverpool, and a line of daily steamers connects it with the outer world. Yet something in the sturdy poise of its race recalls the old motto of the land, — *Quocunque jeceris stabit*. (‘However you throw it, it will stand.’) The old enchantment hovers over the spot, although a sail of six hours brings one into the life of to-day.

“In response to a request from the writer of this sketch, Mary Clemmer wrote of her father:—

“‘The first memory I recall of the aspect of my father was when I was five years old. They placed me in a high chair at the tea-table, and instead of eating, I sat gazing at my father, because, to my child’s vision, he looked so handsome. My first

outburst of grief I recall at the same table, when a person told me that sometime my father's raven hair would be gray. The announcement to me was so terrible I burst into tears.

“Abraham Clemmer carried in his bearing and on his face the visible stamp of a superior race. He was of fine stature, with an alert step and a haughty poise of the head. His features were patrician in outline and expression. His head high, his hair black and curling, his brows arched, his hazel eyes dark and full, his nose finely aquiline, his mouth as exquisitely cut as Apollo's, with the suggestion of disdain in its curves, yet full of sweetness. This was the beauty of his prime. In old age, in its patriarchal aspect, it became still more uncommon, and in death was so remarkable that those who had never seen him in life, looking upon him in his last sleep robed for the grave, recall his face to-day, with the seal of ineffable peace upon it, as one of the most nobly beautiful that they had ever gazed upon in death.

“He had the temperament of the poet. He loved Nature with that passion which finds in her presence perpetual satisfaction and solace. He loved beauty with the fine fervor that makes its love religion. He loved music with an enthusiasm that was in itself an inspiration. He wrote with great elegance, drew with remarkable accuracy and facility, was a natural linguist.

“ ‘With due opportunity he would have excelled as an artist, or have succeeded by any profession demanding the development of the finest mental faculties. What in his noble life he never attained was the power of calculation indispensable to merely material success.

“ ‘Born of a race for many generations devoted exclusively to artistic and scientific pursuits, the calculating insight, the forethought of the money-getter, the commercial instinct that commands financial gain, were left by nature out of his temperamental and mental make-up.

“ ‘Unadapted in every way to a life of business, the circumstances of his lot doomed him early to it, with the inevitable sequence, — failure in all the results that build up financial fortune. He lived and died a poor man, bequeathing to his children as their supreme earthly inheritance the necessity of shaping life for themselves. His generosity was a fault, giving to others — often to the unworthy — what he should have kept for himself and his children. Honorable at any cost to himself, his heart was full of charity. In my whole life I never heard him speak to the detriment of any human being. The absent were always safe in his kindly and gentle speech. His youth glowed with fire and with dreams for the future, whose fulfilment the limitations of his lot made impossible.

“ ‘No man ever put more patience, more industry,

more energy, into his struggles for a home and a competency. With a little, only a little, more iron in his nature, he could have compelled adversity to yield to fortune, — could have commanded the friends, who never dreamed that they could serve him till it was too late. It was not in him. He yielded to the blows of adverse fate — he never struck back. He accepted at last the fact of material failure as the final sum of his lot — accepted it with a gentleness and a patience which lifted its very pathos into the atmosphere of serenity. But the absolute consciousness of this fact was the final blow of fortune. It broke his spirit; after it he never struggled again. He mellowed into old age with a childlikeness and sweetness of temper which won the hearts of all who approached him. Years of wasting malady he bore with a patience that was angelic. Hour by hour he drew constant solace from Nature, — from the beauty of the green earth that he loved. The joy of sight never failed him till it failed him on earth forever. Not till the day he died was his chair by the window vacant, where for years he had gazed out on the roses of his garden, and on the gay sights of the streets of the Capital City.

“That Christmas Sabbath morning, 1881, when asked if he felt able to go downstairs, for the first time he shook his head. Before another morning God took him.

“A Christian believer from youth, with a smile

ineffable which chanced to fall upon the face of his child, — his last look on earth, — without a sigh he passed out to the Father of his spirit. Never did that Father gather back to his all-loving heart a more ingenuous, a more gentle, a more loving child.

“ ‘Such, ever-mourned, ever-missed, ever-loved, was — is — my father.

“ ‘One day that was his very own, — a day all balm and azure and gold, — we laid all of him that was dust in God’s acre, in the inalienable churchyard of Rock Creek, in a suburb of the city of Washington, where the pines will sough, the birds sing above his head, the creek murmur, the flowers bloom beside him till the Resurrection.’ ”

The death of her father was as distressing to her as it could have been if he had been suddenly removed in his prime. Nearly a year afterward, in September, 1882, she said in a letter: “Inwardly, I do not get over at all his life or his death. Both come back to me every hour, and I presume always will.”

To the author of the article previously mentioned Mary Clemmer also wrote as follows of her mother and her mother’s family: —

“William Kneale is a name still most honorably known in the Isle of Man as borne by the author, Mr. William Kneale, of Douglas. In 1827 my grandfather, William Kneale, a deeply religious and studious man, desiring for his young children a larger outlook and more extended educational advantages than the Isle of Man at that time afforded, sold his patrimony, with that of his proud, high-spirited wife (born Margaret Craine), and sailed for America. His destination with his family was the State of Ohio; but meeting friends from the island by the way, at the young city of Utica, New York, he paused on his journey and never resumed it. He at once purchased a homestead, which, now in the heart of the city of Utica, is still in possession of his family. In this homestead grew to womanhood, and was married, Margaret Kneale.

“She was a dazzlingly fair, wide-eyed, blue-eyed daughter of the Vikings. She brought with her to bleak New York not only the radiant complexion for which the women of Mona’s Isle are famous, but also all the best inherited traits of her ancient race, — a passion for liberty in its relation to the whole human family; absolute faith in God; the deepest, most spontaneous religious fervor, with an intense desire for knowledge that pervaded her entire being.

“The city of Utica, settled by many of the oldest and most cultivated families of New England, lured

from their sterile surroundings by the opulent soil and magnificent promise of the Mohawk Valley, was from its very beginning a small centre of religious, educational, philanthropic, and reformatory ideas and action. It was a rallying-point for the early 'Abolitionists.' Beriah Green, Alvan Stuart, and Gerrit Smith, in those days, were the apostles and prophets of freedom to the slave. From the convocations over which they presided issued such Abolitionists as John Brown, William Lloyd Garrison, and Wendell Phillips.

“To the influence of such public teachers, to the marvellously active spirit of ‘reform’ which in all the churches insisted on the highest thinking, acting, and living in every phase of human life, added to the same influence in her own home, wherein her father was not only the father of his children but a father in the Church, may be traced that life-long devotion to every good cause, especially to that of the downtrodden and oppressed everywhere, which marks Margaret Clemmer in Washington to-day as it marked young Margaret Kneale in Utica long ago.”

When, in the autumn of 1883, Mary Clemmer visited the Isle of Man and found herself amid the scenes and surroundings of her mother's childhood, she was deeply affected. In the hospitable little city of Peel she saw the stone

house in which her mother was born. It was a part of the patrimony of her grandmother, and was sold in 1827 when the family removed to America. In the village of Ballaugh, a few miles distant, she crossed the threshold of another stone house, that in which her grandmother was born, and her father before her, and no one could say how many generations before him. Close to the house stands the old stone mill which for centuries has ground the grain of the neighboring farms, — a picturesque little structure, with its big wheel on the outside turned by a pure stream that flows from the mountains of Man to the Irish Sea. "Squeen Mill," which has been the property of the eldest son in each generation for many centuries, is now held by John Craine, a lineal descendant of the John Craine who was Mary Clemmer's great-grandfather. A number of descendants of the John Craine of 1791 have their homes in the parish, and the family gives no evidence of decay. It is a family which has

always borne a good name, and which has always owned and lived upon the homesteads of Ballaugh. The parish registers, which have been preserved with much care by the rector, the Rev. Mr. Kermode, give the genealogy of the Craine family for three centuries. Mr. Kermode has kindly copied the names of the Craines born in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the list is of sufficient interest to find a place here. It will be seen that a few names were constantly employed from generation to generation, and that among them were some of the sweetest of feminine Christian names, — Mary, Dorothy, Alice, Barbara, Elinor, Bessy, Catherine, Letitia.

BAPTISMS OF THE CRAINE FAMILY.

EXTRACTED FROM BALLAUGH PARISH REGISTER, ISLE OF MAN.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1608. Ffin : Craine, s. of Wm. C. | 1622. John, s. of Wm. C. |
| 1610. Gubbon Craine, s. to Wm. C. of the Glaick. | 1623. Jouy, d. of Ffinlo C. |
| 1614. Patrick Craue, s. of Wm. Thomas Craine, s. of Phinlo. | 1624. John, s. of John C. Robt., s. of Donold de Carmodell. |
| 1616. John Craine, s. of Donold. | 1625. Bessy, d. of Donold C. |
| 1617. Margt. Craine, d. of Wm. | 1627. Ann C., d. of John C. John, s. of Donold C. |
| 1619. Nicho : Craine, s. of Donold. | 1628. John C., s. of Donold C. |
| 1620. Jouy, d. of Wm. C. (Glaick). Jouy, d. of Gilbert C. | 1629. Margt., d. of Donold C. John, s. of Nicholas C. |
| 1621. Ffinlo, s. of John C. | 1630. Elin C., d. of John C. Jouy, d. of John C. |
| Jouv, d. of John C. | 1631. Hugh, s. of Donold C. |
| Isabella, d. Wm. de Carmodell. | |

1632. Jouy, d. of Donold C.
John, s. of John C.
1633. John, s. of Donold C.
Patt: s. of Thomas C.
Hugh, s. of Philip C.
1635. Wm., s. of Gubbon C.
1637. Margt. C., d. of Thomas C.
1638. Amy C., d. of John C.
Margt. Crayne, d. of Gubbon C.
Ann, d. of Ffinlo C.
1644. Wm., s. of Thomas C.
1645. John, s. of Thomas C.
Jouy, d. of Gilbert C.
1646. Catherine, d. of Phinlo C.
John, s. of Thomas C.
1647. Ellin, d. of James C.
1648. Margt., d. of Thomas C.
1651. Margt., d. of Thomas C.
1654. Jane, d. of Wm. C.
Wm., s. of John C.
1656. Ellin, d. of John C.
Thos: s. of Thos: de Ballabegg.
1657. Nicholas, s. of John de Dollaugh.
Ann, d. of Thos. de Glaick.
1658. Ellin, d. of Hugh C.
Dollin, s. of John C.
Alice, d. of Thomas C.
1659. Margaret, d. of John C.
1660. Robert, s. of John C.
Thomas, s. of Patrick C.
John, s. of Ffinlo C.
1661. Thomas, s. of Thomas C.
Alice, d. of John C.
Ann, d. of John C.
1662. Patrick, s. of Thomas C.
Wm., s. of Thos: de Ballabegg.
1665. Wm., s. of Thos: de Ballabegg.
1667. Margt., d. of John C.
1670. Thos: and Margt. (twynes) s.
and d. of John C.
1678. Amy, d. of John C.
1680. Margaret, d. of Wm. C.
1681. Ffinlo, s. of Daniell C.
1683. Patt: Crane, s. of Thos: C.
1684. Wm., s. of Daniell C.
1685. John, s. to Nicholas C.
Patrick, s. of John C.
Wm., s. of Thos: C.
1687. Wm., s. of Nicho: C.
Margt., d. of Danl. C.
1688. Margt., d. of Ffinlo C.
1689. Ann, d. of Danl. C.
1690. Thos., s. of Wm. C. (Glaick).
1698. Patt: s. of Wm and Margt. C.
1701. Danl., s. of Thos: of Dollagh.
Mary, d. of John C. (Curragh).
1702. Isabel, d. of Wm. C. (Ballabeg).
Phillip, s. of Wm. C. (Glaick).
1703. Ffinlo, s. of Ffinlo C. (Carmodil).
1704. Mary, d. of Thos: C. (Dollaugh).
1705. Dorothy, d. of Wm. C. (Ballabeg).
1706. Thos: s. of Thos: C. (Dollough).
1707. Alice, d. of Wm. C. (Glaick).
Wm., s. of Wm. C. (Ballabeg).
Thos: s. of John C.
1710. Barbara, d. of John C. and
Nelly Harrison.
1711. John, s. of John and Nelly H.
1712. John, s. of Ffinlo of Carmodil.
Alice, d. of John C. (Dollough).
1713. Thos: s. of Wm. C. of Ballabeg.
Juo: s. of Wm. C. of the Gill.
1715. Jouey, of Juo. C. of Dolloughbeg.
Wm., s. of Wm. C. (Weaver).
1716. Margt., d. of Ffinlo C. Carmiddle.
1717. Philip, s. of Wm. C. (Weaver).
1718. Margt., d. of John C. (Dolloughbeg).
Thos., s. of Patk. (Dolloughbeg)
and Jaue Harrison.
1719. Danl., s. of Wm C. (Weaver).
1720. John, s. of John C. (Dolloughbeg).
1722. Jouey, d. of Wm. C. (Weaver.)
Elinor, d. of Pat. C. and Jane H'n.
1723. Mary, d. of John C. (Dollough).
1724. Jane, d. of Wm. C.
1725. Margt., d. of Patk. and Jane H'n.
- Isabel, d. of John C. (Dolloughbeg).
1726. Nicholas, s. of Wm. C. (Weaver).
Wm., s. of Thos: C. of Glaick.
1727. Jane, d. of Patrick C.
1728. Wm., s. of Patk. C. (Glover).
Thos., s. of Thos. C. (Glaick).
1729. Thos., s. of John C. and Isabel Killip.
1730. John, s. of John C.
Nicholas, s. of Wm. C.
Cath., d. of Wm. C.
1734. Philip, s. of Thos. C.
Elinor, d. of Danl. C.
Patrick, s. of Thos. C.
1735. Christian, d. of Thos. (Glaick).
1736. Mary, d. of Danl. C.
1738. Thos., s. of Thos. C.
Danl., s. of Thos. C.
1738. Edwd., s. of John C.
1741. Philip, s. of Thos. C.
Margt., d. of John C.

1743. John C., s. of Wm. C. (Miller of Squeeu).
Jane C., d. of Thos. C. (Carmodil).
1744. Wm. C., s. of Wm. C. (Miller).
1752. Cath. C., d. of John Voar.
Philip, s. of John C. (Castel Lough).
1754. Danl., s. of Philip C.
Thos., s. of Wm. C. (Squeen Mill)
Jane, d. of John C. (Dolloughbeg)
1755. Cath., d. of John C. (Weaver).
1756. John, s. of Philip C.
Philip, s. of Wm. C. of Squeen.
Thos., s. of Thos. C. (Glaick).
1758. Ann, d. of John C. (Weaver).
1759. Henry, s. of Philip C. (Tailor).
Cath., d. of Thos. C. (Glaick).
1760. Isabel, d. of John C. (Dolloughbeg).
1761. Thos., s. of Thos. C. (Glaick)
John, s. of John C. (Kiarlane).
Philip, s. of Philip and Isabel C.
1765. Thos., s. of John C. and Bahu Kneale.
1766. Nicholas, s. of John C. and Bahu Kneale.
1767. Nicholas, s. Philip and Isabel C.
1768. Thos., s. of John C. (Dolloughbeg).
Wm., son of Thos. C. (Glaick).
1770. Philip, s. of John C. and Bahu Kneale.
Philip, s. of Thos. C. (Glaick).
1771. Isabel, d. of Philip and Isabel C.
Thos., s. of Philip C. and Cath. Tear.
1772. Ann, d. of John C. and Bahu K.
1773. Robt., s. of Thos. C. (Glaick).
1774. Cath., d. of Philip C. and Cath. Tear.
Danl., s. of John C. (Voast) and Bahu.
Wm., s. of Robt. C. and Cath. Caine.
John, s. of John and Margt. C.
1776. Wm., s. of John C. and Bahu Kneale.
1777. Thos., s. of John C. and Margt. Corlett.
1778. Eliz'th, d. of John C. and Bahu K.
1780. James, s. of J. C. and Bahu K.
Wm., s. of John C. and Margt.
Thos., s. of Robt. C. and Cath. Caine.
Ann, d. of Wm C.
1782. Thos., s. of John and Margt. C.
1783. Wm., s. of Wm. C. and Ann Garret.
1784. Ann, d. of John C. and Margt. Isabel, d. of Robt. C. and Cath. Caine.
Harry, s. of J. C. and Bahu K.
1785. Robt., s. of John C. and Margt. Killey.
1786. Eliz'th, d. of Thos. C. and Letitia Gelling.
Isabel, d. of Robt. C. and Cath. Caine.
1787. James, s. of John C. and Margt. Killey.
Robt., s. of John C. and Margt. Killey.
1788. James, s. of Wm. C. and Jane Hughes.
Letitia, d. of Thos. C. and Letitia Gelling.
1789. Henry, s. of Danl. C. and Christian Corlett.
1790. Mary, d. of Thos. C. and Letitia Gelling.
1791. Wm., s. of Wm. C. and Jane Hughes.
Margt., d. of John C. and Ann Cowley.
Isabel, d. of Danl. C. and Christian Corlett.
1792. Cath., d. of Robt. C. and Cath. Cain.
Elinor, d. of Philip C. and Eliz. Killey.
John, s. of John C. and Ann Cowley.
1793. Jane, d. of Wm. Crane and Jane Hughes.
Thos., s. of Thos. C. (Glaick).
1794. Jane, d. of Philip C. and Eliz. Killey.
1795. Harry, s. of Wm. C. and Jane Hughes.
Thos., s. of John C. and Ann Cowley.
Ann, d. of Robt. C. and Cath. Cain.
1797. Wm., s. of Philip C. and Eliz. Killey.
John, s. of Wm. C. and Jane Hughes.
1798. Anne, d. of John C. and Ann Cowley.
Wm., s. of Robt. C. and Cath. Cain.
1799. Margt., d. of Wm. C. and Jane Hughes.
1800. Anne, d. of Philip C. and Eliz. Killey.

This transcript from the parish records shows that in two centuries there were seventeen Margarets in the Craine family in Ballaugh, and it appears that there has never been a time within the memory of man when some one bearing that name has not resided there. Could the older records be read, they would show others of the same name. There was one in 1599. The Margaret born in 1791 was Mary Clemmer's grandmother.

The history of the Isle of Man contains many narratives of the incursions of the Norsemen in the twelfth and earlier centuries. The invaders naturally landed on the northerly shores of the island and obtained their first and strongest foothold there. There is no doubt that the name Kneale is of Norse origin. It is a variation of Niel or Nigel, and it is a curious fact that the latest Runic inscription to be found on the island is a memorial cross at Kirk Michael bearing the name Nial, which is believed to be another form of the same appellation. The

name of Craine (always so spelled in the Isle of Man) is also thought to have belonged originally to the bold sea warriors who descended upon the little island from the North, and who often made life very terrible for the early Manxmen. Whatever they may have been centuries ago, their posterity have no reason to complain of a lineage which has transmitted so many good and noble qualities and so little that is evil or base. The natives of the island are for the most part a strong and worthy people, among whom religion and education flourish and thrift and good habits prevail. They retain to a large extent the ancient love for the sea; and the sailors who go out from the north and west coasts of the Isle of Man are the best and manliest seafarers in all the world.

Her visit to the old home in the Isle of Man was cut short by the necessity of returning to the United States; but it gave her intensest pleasure while it lasted. Had she lived, she

would certainly have returned to meet again the hearty welcome of the relatives and friends whom she found there, and to enjoy for a longer season the pleasant scenery and the delightful historical associations of the ancient island which, while still thoroughly loyal to the British crown, seems to be wholly free from the perturbing political and social problems that afflict the greater communities over which her British Majesty holds sway. It was the sad consciousness of approaching physical prostration that caused the blue eyes to fill with tears as the steamer bore her away from Douglas harbor on an October morning; and she felt, as she saw the place that had suddenly become very dear to her sink into the sea, that she could never look upon it again. On the deck of the steamer she wrote this sonnet:—

BALLAUGH.

Home of my mother! by the shining sea,
Beauteous Ballaugh! Far from a stranger shore
A pilgrim stands by thy deserted door,

Burdened with love and tenderest memory.

Gone generations, turn ye back to me !

Repass the threshold ye crossed long before !

The centuried oak ye sowed in years of yore
Spreads o'er your child its undimmed panoply.

Glen of Ballaugh ! Thou loveliest sylvan pass

'Twixt sea and mountain. On thy fern-hung stream

The moss-grown mill-wheel resteth in a dream ;

The Michaelmas daisy dots the doorway grass ;

The red-belled fuchsias in tall hedges gleam —

Love of caressing seas, farewell. Alas !

In the city of Utica, where, as it has been stated, the Kneale family settled down in 1827, Margaret Kneale was married some ten years afterward to Abraham Clemmer, and there Mary Clemmer was born and her childhood passed. While she was still a young girl the family removed, for business reasons, to Westfield, Massachusetts. There two of her mother's brothers resided, and thenceforth Westfield remained the family home until after the close of the War of the Rebellion. During this period other children were born, of whom four sisters and two brothers grew to maturity and still survive.

In Westfield was an excellent school, the Westfield Academy, where Mary Clemmer found the best educational advantages she ever enjoyed, and indeed perhaps as good as any town or city in the country then afforded. That she was a child of remarkable and unusual intelligence, it is needless here to affirm. From her earliest school-days she had shown a fondness and a capacity for literature, and especially for poetry. In fact, she had begun to make rhymes almost as soon as she had learned to write, so natural and spontaneous was the rhythmical element in her nature. As a child she was singularly emotional, sensitive, and religious, and capable of exaltation of feeling that, it may easily be, was not fully comprehended by those around her. But she was always a very efficient and practical little girl, nevertheless; and such a natural care-taker was she that, in the rapidly growing family with its many needs, she from her earliest years shared responsibilities that do not generally fall upon

girls before they are out of their teens. Doubtless if these responsibilities had been less onerous, and if life had been a less perplexing problem, she would not have been hurried in her seventeenth year into a relation which she little comprehended, and one she was never to cease to regret. The following reference to this matter, which appears in the article heretofore quoted from, undoubtedly expressed her own view of it: —

“While yet a school-girl, with no knowledge of actual life, with no desire of her own to impel her to the step she took, moved by misfortune that had fallen upon her home, she yielded to the wishes and the will of others, and was married to a man many years her senior. All that was spiritually right in this relation, called a marriage, was its final legal annulment.”

Needless is it to say here that she should have been saved from the sorrow and hardship then entailed upon her. Needless is it to say that the relation should have been terminated ten years earlier than it was, in 1874. Needless is

it to attempt to apportion responsibility for what she suffered and what she missed. Better is it to show how she took up her heavy burden, and, growing strong through her suffering and her need, carried it with noble courage and rarest womanly power while life remained to her. It will be quite enough to say that while she endeavored to give an outward assent and compliance to a relation that never was spiritually aught else than an impossibility to her, she temporarily resided in Western Massachusetts, in Minnesota, in New York, and, during the war, in Harper's Ferry, Virginia; that she never anywhere found a home that she could be allowed permanently to rest in, and that years before she finally undertook the entire support of herself and her father and mother, in 1866, she had found it necessary to look forward to such a result, and to prepare herself for it.

If but a limited space is devoted in this volume to the early life of Mary Clemmer, or if no effort is made to dwell upon mere personal

history not necessary to the presentation of the character and the achievements of the woman, it is only because such a course would have been most pleasing to her, and not that there is any obligation of reticence or of silence concerning her career. To avoid giving needless pain or offence, but never to avoid the truth if the truth need be spoken, was with her an all-important rule of conduct. All the main conditions of her life were determined by circumstances and considerations over which she had practically no control. Surrounded from her earliest years by many obstacles to systematic study and to the highest mental development, she overcame them all, and attained to powers which she might never have shown if her life had been an easy one, and her experience more superficial. Not the difficulties in themselves that environed her, nor the hardships that bore down upon her, but how she surmounted them, should be the main object of regard in any just estimate of her character. What if it were to

be shown that when the way seemed hardest for her she seriously considered whether it were not best to take her own life, and thus end a struggle in which she felt that spiritual and mental, if not physical, existence must in any event be sacrificed, — a situation which daily grew more intolerable, and from which there seemed to be no escape? She did not take her own life, but bravely went on with the struggle. That she was able to do this should be a message of encouragement and of stimulus to other weary and heavy-laden human hearts; and so long as we see how the victory was won, it is not necessary to scrutinize all the conditions that precipitated the contest. Such personal facts relating to her life as have any real public interest can be most appropriately stated in the subsequent chapters, devoted to her personal traits and characteristics, her friendships, and her literary work.

CHAPTER III.

PERSONAL TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS.—HER RELIGIOUS LIFE.

THE portrait of Mary Clemmer which is contained in this volume fails, as every photographic likeness of her always failed, to give that expression of sweetness and of kindly feeling that was rarely absent from her countenance when in the presence of her friends; but it does convey the strong outlines of the head and face, and quite accurately presents her admirable and striking figure. It is the figure of a woman five feet and six inches in height, gracefully proportioned, perfectly developed, erect, well poised, full of dignity and repose. The strength of her face resided in the broad, prominent brow, with the high arches over the eyes, indicating great power of per-

ception as well as of reflection, and in the eyes themselves, which could flame with indignation as easily as they could drop gentlest tears of sympathy or of distress; and how readily the tears flowed from those blue orbs every friend could not help knowing, for they were never long withheld. One jarring word from any one she cared for always sufficed to precipitate that April-like flood of emotion. Such honest, kindly blue eyes they were; and yet they could so search and challenge, if once doubt or hostility had good reason to exist in her mind. The nose, too, was strong, but the round little mouth and dimpled chin told less of strength than of the shy and sensitive nature that made her one of the most feminine of women. Her cheeks and lips were rarely destitute of high color, betokening her Northern ancestry. Hair of a light brown, as soft as the finest silk, and an ear that was as perfect as her little hand, which a sculptor might have gone into ecstasies over, indicated the delicacy of her physical organization. She

was, indeed, most liberally endowed with the attributes of physical beauty; and to these was added a voice that was the very music of her gentle and loving spirit, so that no matter how often it was heard, its tones always brought a fresh charm and a new sense of delight.

Until the last year of her life she wore always the look of abounding and radiant health. Previous to the year 1875 there did not live in the world a woman more free from the physical ills that ordinarily encompass the lives of the more delicately organized sex than she was. During the subsequent years of pain and prostration she still "looked" so well that few could perceive or realize how much she suffered. To her, health had always been not more a delight than a duty. She would have felt sickness to be nothing less than disgraceful. Nature had provided her with a perfect physical organization, and she deemed it the highest obligation she owed to herself and to others to protect it and preserve it. Her compassion for

the great multitude of feminine beings who go through life with an unceasing consciousness of their physical weakness and shortcoming was deep and abiding ; but she would have looked on such weakness in herself as humiliating, if not sinful. When not held fast in the clutches of acute cerebral pain, she invariably woke in the morning to a sense that it was good to live ; and this joy in living was the key-note of her whole existence. Perhaps she never expressed her own soul more clearly and beautifully than in the concluding paragraph of the chapter "Let us Live," in "Men, Women, and Things," where she said :—

"Yes, Swedenborg's doctrine is true. We in our lower state are infested with demons, — the demons of selfishness, which hold us down from the fulness and perfectness of human existence. Yet the soul will not be defrauded altogether of its birthright. Sometimes it soars and takes possession of its high estate. Then you know what it is to be glad to live. In some clear dawn, in some still night, in some moment of rest, when you possess your soul in peace, you realize it all, — the bliss of being, the joy of

breathing, the ministry of light, of color, of odor, of sound, the ecstasy of inspiration, the presence of God. . . . Every breeze that stirs, every bird that sings, every flower that blooms, every moment, with its utmost perfect possibility, — is my minister, a portion of the universal joy of life. Get thee behind me, world, — the world of mean cares, of self-love, of petty strifes, of poor ambitions! Give me that which is holy and eternal, — the kind word, the unselfish deed, the care for others in little things, the charity that can suffer and yet be kind, the affection which, sweetening life and surviving death, is our only foretaste of Heaven.”

Of course there could not be such capacity for delight in mere *being* without a correlative capacity for suffering; and her delicate nature and sensitive spirit were wounded and hurt by a thousand causes which scarcely irritate women of a temperament less fine than hers. But however she might be hurt for the time, her spirits could not long be kept down. There was the strong wine of joy in the Norse blood that coursed in her veins which revived her soul after every disappointment or disaster, which

left her never so poor in spirit that she had not some residue of happiness and peace to give to others.

How generously she gave of this rich and vital sympathy let any friend she ever possessed be called to testify; and not to friends only, but to all whose lives came at any time into relation with hers, was this fountain of tender feeling, of kindness and helpfulness, ever open. Her consideration for those about her was as constant as it was delightful to experience. She understood human nature so thoroughly, and had such a keen realization of its limitations and of the hardships and obstacles which lie across the pathway of most human lives, that she was always prepared to make allowance for them, and to take the gentle and kindly view of the shortcoming, the helplessness, and the failure she saw in the world. One thing only she would not tolerate or permit excuses to be made for under any circumstances. That was a lack of truthfulness and of honor. To her,

insincerity and untruthfulness were horrible. If they appeared in one who was near to her in any relation, she suffered intensely. The feeling of exasperation which falsehood and deceit aroused in her was painful in the extreme, and could never be wholly removed when once it had real cause to exist. She was ready to extend unquestioning confidence to her friend, and she exacted only good faith and integrity in return for the confidence she gave. So strong was her natural hostility to anything savoring of deception, that she was never able to take the slightest pleasure in witnessing the entertainments of conjurers and masters of sleight of hand. Amateur skill in these arts, so amusing to many persons, was to her wearisome and reprehensible. She prayed to be delivered from all illusions and from all concealments. Dishonesty was never anything but devilish in her sight, and it was in dealing with the small and mean subterfuges and pretences of political and social life that her writings sometimes

seemed too emphatic and exclamatory to those who were not aware how impossible it was for her to restrain her impetuous and intense disapprobation of even the slightest departure from what was truthful and just in speech and in conduct.

If there was one power she possessed more remarkable than any other it was that of vision. Her physical gift in this respect was extraordinary; but no more so than that of her spiritual insight, which was surpassingly fine and clear. She was, indeed, a seer; and whether she gazed upon the stars in the sky, the petals of her flowers, or the faces of men and women, she saw with her marvellously clear and penetrating vision much that others could not see. Her ability to read thought and character, however masked or hidden behind the human countenance, seemed almost like the power that passes by the name of "second sight." She rarely failed at a first glance to perceive intuitively the moral condition and quality of any person who

was presented to her ; and this rare power was at once a safeguard and a weapon in her possession. It enabled her to give an instant welcome to moral worth and honest purpose wherever she encountered them, and it usually protected her from falling into undesirable associations and intimacies. She certainly never failed in this spiritual discernment of men ; but now and then her intense sympathy for women whose lives seemed not so happy as her own may have blinded her perceptions of them for a moment. Certainly if the Evil One, clothed in a human form as in a garment, ever managed to steal for a little time into her presence, and to simulate regard for her in order that he might go away and do her an injury, the form in which he disguised himself was that of one of her own sex. In her solicitude for the weak, the erring, the unfortunate, she occasionally bestowed her kindness on persons who were as ready to seek to injure her as she was to give counsel and comfort to them. Such depravity of nature in

women always baffled her. She could not understand it, and seemed not to know how to deal with it. She was herself so grateful for every kind act and word, that she could not conceive the absence of such a sentiment in others.

It was impossible for persons who gained their first knowledge of her from her writings, and especially from her letters on public affairs, and who were impressed by the independent and fearless spirit, the moral courage displayed in them, to realize the sensitive, shrinking, unasserting nature of the woman who could battle valiantly for the rights of others, but seemed often incapable of demanding and insisting upon her own. She was so utterly destitute of selfish feeling that she frequently failed to protect her own life and thought from invasions that were disastrous, frequently failed to obtain advantages and enjoyments that were properly her own. It is, at this point, of interest to quote some words of counsel, as just as they were well

meant, which were written to her by her friend Alice Cary :—

“ Lastly, my dear, let me admonish you to stand more strongly by your own nature. God gave it to you. For that reason alone you should think well of it, and make the most of it. I say this because I think that your tender conscience is a little morbid as well as tender. You hardly think that you have a right to God’s best gifts, — to the enjoyment of the free air and sunshine. Your little innocent delights you constantly buy at a great cost. When you have given the loaf, you hardly think you have a right to the crust. One part of your nature is all the time set against the other, and you take the self-sacrificing side. I know through what straits you are dragged. You could not be selfish if you would, and I would not have you so if I could. But I do think you should compel yourself to live a higher, more expansive, and expressive life. You are entitled to it. There is a cloud all the time between you and the sun, and even the soulless plants cannot live in the shade. I did not intend to write all this ; somehow, it seemed to write itself. If I have said more than I ought, I pray you pardon me.”

One of the traits which distinguished her was her promptness and precision in the keeping

of every engagement into which she entered. This was natural in one who was so considerate of the rights and feelings of others ; but a sense of what she owed to herself also made her ever 2 regardful of every promised undertaking. It was an essential element in the efficiency of her character, and efficient she was in every relation of life. She had a keen appreciation of the value of time and the peril of procrastination. Referring to the habit of putting off the duty of to-day till a more convenient season, she wrote, in a private letter, in 1880 : —

“ I have suffered so much from the discomfort and loss that have come of it — that it makes the reason why I am so imperative to have everything done in its season. ‘ If you have anything to do, do it,’ is the instinctive law of my life. It is the clew to all success. There can be neither thrift nor fruition without it.” 9

The efficient spirit that found expression in these words was characteristic of her whole life. To do well and promptly everything she found

to do, and to find some pleasure if she could in the doing, was the rule she followed and sought to induce others to follow. She counted that day lost when she had failed, through any cause, to add something to her own thought or to the expression of it; and the highest privilege and pleasure she knew was the exercise of her intellectual powers. When not incapacitated by pain or interrupted by social duties, she always went with gladness to her writing; and her pleasure in that was expressed in her sonnet "Work," which ends thus: —

"O crowning bliss! O treasure never bought!
All else may perish, thou remainest sweet."

Her habit was to devote her mornings to her writing, but she learned to respond to the demands of the newspapers she wrote for without much regard to hours of labor, and often her evenings as well as her mornings found her at her writing-desk. She wrote with such facility, often it seemed with such inspiration, that her composition was very rapid, and she could

produce an article filling four columns of her favorite newspaper almost at one sitting. Her poetry too was produced at times with an apparent rapidity that was remarkable; but this was because she often found numbers of her rhythmical verses complete in her mind before she undertook to transcribe them at all.

It was impossible for a woman with such a spirit to be happy without a home of her own; and great was her satisfaction when in 1876 she was able to install herself in a pleasant mansion near the Capitol in Washington, where her father and mother could be with her, and where she could rest and work in peace. The house-keeping and home-keeping talent was peculiarly hers, and household details were never irksome to her if she had faithful servants. She was prouder of her success in this domestic arena than of anything she wrote on public matters; and when she had opportunity she was glad to turn aside from the sort of writing that was chiefly demanded of her, and to discuss the

affairs of the household and the domestic circle. The processes of the kitchen, so mysterious to many ladies, she never permitted to pass from beyond her knowledge and control; and her own punctuality and efficiency were infused into everything that pertained to her home life. Nor was she lacking in any of the qualities that belong to refined and charming womanhood. Her taste in dress and in all matters of personal and household adornment was admirable. Her sensibility to color was especially delicate. She loved to surround herself with pictures and with flowers; indeed, the latter seemed to be almost as essential to her as the air she breathed, and she was rarely without them. She liked to tend them as they grew, and they seemed to grow faster for her than for others' tending. Her knowledge of them was extensive, and she liked to increase it. Among wild flowers she fancied above all others the golden-rod, which suggested one of her poems, while of the cultivated flowers, the rose was always her

favorite ; and the little rose-tree that blooms all summer by the head of her grave in Rock Creek churchyard was set out by her own hand.

The religious experience of Mary Clemmer is a subject upon which much might be written, yet of which much need not be written. A life that was all devotion to others, that was guided and pervaded by the loftiest sense of duty and the finest conscientiousness in all its course from first to last, could not be other than a religious life. Her spirit, under favoring circumstances, could have adapted itself readily to the secluded career of a religious sisterhood. In her girlhood she passed through a period of exaltation not uncommon to young women of very fine spiritual organization. It would have been most natural and proper that she should at this time have become a communicant in that church into which her mother was baptized in Peel, and to which she always felt that she belonged ; but circumstances then rendered such

a connection impossible, and it was not until long afterward that, kneeling at the chancel of old St. John's, in Washington, she received from good Bishop Pinkney the rite of baptism as a member of that church. It was wholly the result of the inexorable conditions of her life that she did not enter into this relation at an earlier period. During many years it happened that her most intimate friends and associates were attached to other Christian denominations, to which she, however, never felt herself in any way drawn. For religious dogmas she never had any fondness. Not what people believed, but what they were and what they did was the all-important matter; and she saw too deeply into the hearts and lives of the men and women about her to attach much importance to professions of religious principles that found no expression in conduct, and were unaccompanied by any genuine growth of the spiritual nature. Nor was it strange that the hardships through which she

passed should have made it difficult — yes, almost impossible at times — for her to maintain her belief in the goodness of her Heavenly Father. She saw and knew too much of human existence to make it possible for her to find any comfort in the belief that “all is for the best,” — that thin blanket of assumption underneath which shallow minds seek hiding and shelter from the evil and the misfortune that is in the world. She knew, however an infinite God might regard his human creatures, that frequently in the lives of men and women everything is for the worst, and that the noblest spirit may be so loaded down with its inheritance of toil and sorrow, that only death can bring to it relief from the burden of its suffering. She knew how much of hardness, of ingratitude, of want of comprehension, of want of appreciation, the gentlest and kindest soul may encounter in the pathway of loyalest and bravest service ; yet she never wholly lost faith, and in her later years it was greatly renewed and refreshed by

her religious associations. Much spiritual help came to her from a sermon preached in Trinity Church, Boston, from the text, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief," which rendered the assumption of religious vows a less difficult, although not less serious matter than it had before seemed to her. A number of her religious poems written about this time reflect the new joy that came to her with a strengthening of her faith. One of them, called "The Message," ends thus:—

"Lo! I believe. No day is ever long,
No life-task tiresome in my happy hand;
A deeper note trembles within my song,
Scarce may the listening angels understand:
The while I sing the heart in me grows strong.

"Dear, tiny trust! with what a tender care
I love and nourish thee this mortal hour;
Sure, further on, from thee, supernal, fair,
I'll see evolve faith's full, consummate flower,
Mine own, dear Lord, before thy face to wear."

She did not longer seek to fathom the mysteries of God's ways in the world, but rested

her whole religious life on the commands and the example of the Christ whose humble and faithful follower she sought to be. Her trust was simple and earnest as that of any child, and beautifully crowned a life of absolute fidelity to Christian principles, which could not have been made more truly Christlike by earlier professions of belief in the dogmas of any religious sect.

CHAPTER IV.

HER WORK IN LITERATURE AND JOURNALISM.

MARY CLEMMER was but little more than twenty years of age when the talent she had manifested from her earliest years, as a writer, was called into active use in order that she might provide for herself and for those who looked to her as a chief support. She was but little older when the whole responsibility for her own maintenance and that of her father and mother fell upon her; and that responsibility she carried in greater or less degree until the last year of her life. Her first work for which she was remunerated consisted of letters to newspapers; and probably the very first thing of that sort she ever did was for the columns of the Utica "Herald," while she was still in her "teens," and in the city of New York. But

this was not by any means her first appearance in print. While a girl in school at Westfield her poetry had found its way into the Springfield "Republican" and some other papers. The attention of Mr. Samuel Bowles was very early drawn to her literary talent, and, always glad to welcome young writers, he gave her encouragement. This encouragement she greatly needed, for she was naturally timid, and extremely sensitive to criticism from any quarter. Her timidity and sensitiveness in regard to what she wrote never left her, even when her extensive knowledge of the world and her unbounded moral courage seemed to have made her the most fearless of commentators on the character and acts of men in public life. She had formed as a school-girl a strong liking for the published writings of Alice Cary, especially for her poetry; and when she went to New York she readily found her way to the home and the heart of that noble woman. There was a mental and spiritual kinship between Alice Cary and Mary

② Clemmer that united them in the strongest bonds of sympathy and affection. What this relationship was to the latter, a passage from her "Memorial of Alice and Phœbe Cary" thus describes: —

"For her sake let me say what, as a woman, she could be and was to another. She found me with habits of thought and of action unformed, and with nearly all the life of womanhood before me. She taught me self-help, courage, and faith. She showed me how I might help myself and help others. Wherever I went, I carried with me her love as a treasure and a staff. How many times I leaned upon it and grew strong! It never fell from me. It never failed me. No matter how life might serve me, I believed, without a doubt, that her friendship would never fail me; and it never did. If I faltered, she would believe in me no less. If I fell, her hand would be the first outstretched to lift me up. All the world might forsake me; yet would not she. I might become an outcast; yet no less would I find in her a shelter and a friend. Yet, saying this, I have not said, and have no power to say, what, as a soul, I owe to her."

② The home of the Carys in Clinton Place was a meeting-place for many of the brilliant and

distinguished men and women who were devoted to literature and journalism in the metropolis. She began her writing for the press by describing this life as she saw it and mingled in it; and the brightness and freshness of her descriptions at once attracted attention. The "New York Letter," which has since become a feature of thousands of newspapers throughout the country, was then a novelty. A writer who could portray the notable people of the leading city as they met and conversed at the Cary receptions was an acquisition to any paper. Her letters, which were full of vivid and entertaining description, speedily became an attractive feature of the journals in which they appeared, and she soon came to know that anything she might write would always be welcomed in a number of editorial sanctums.

Having thus, before she had reached the age of twenty, become used to the appearance of her poems and letters in print, and found that what she wrote evoked a certain sympathetic

response in the minds of numbers of readers, and having become well acquainted with many writers who had won fame and pecuniary reward, her ambition to do more and better work was stimulated, and she continued her literary efforts. To undertake a novel was an idea that soon presented itself to her mind; and accordingly she devoted considerable time, just before the outbreak of the war, to writing "*Victoire*," a work of which some of her friends will perhaps now hear for the first time. It was published in the year 1864 by Carleton, and shared the fate of many "first novels," reaching a comparatively small number of readers, but showing clearly the talent and the promise of the writer. The story is plainly overburdened with spiritual and religious emotion. It is not difficult to perceive that life has already proved a very hard and baffling problem to the author, who is nevertheless trying to make the most and best of it. Her loneliness of spirit is revealed in every chapter. There are many strong passages

in the story ; but probably its chief value was the experience which she gained in writing it, and the kindly and helpful criticism it evoked. This was precisely what she needed. She had not received during her girlhood the full measure of educational training and of mental discipline that should have been hers, nor did she have, until she met the Carys, the advantages of intellectual companionship which she greatly needed. She had been a voracious reader of books, especially of history, and of English and French memoirs ; but the early marriage and the subsequent vicissitudes of her life deprived her of opportunity for systematic study and intellectual discipline that would have been of the highest value to her, and must have added greatly to the merit of her earlier literary work.

Very early in the war period circumstances not within her own control made it necessary for her to go to Washington. But this was not until after she had become completely acquainted

with the horrors of the war,—an experience gained during a residence of several months at Harper's Ferry, where she had been an eyewitness of the surrender of the Union forces under Miles. She was for a time a prisoner in the hands of the Rebels, and was afterward allowed to re-enter the Union lines, but under circumstances of great anxiety and hardship. The events that occurred at Harper's Ferry in the autumn of 1862 were among the most painful of the whole war for patriotic citizens to contemplate. To the sensitive young woman, who had spent most of her girlhood in peaceful Western Massachusetts, the sights and sounds of that sharp conflict were terrible indeed. She described what she saw and endured at that time in a series of letters that were afterward incorporated in her novel, "Eirene." The bombardment and the surrender of Harper's Ferry were the most exciting and memorable experiences of her life. How intensely her feelings were stirred is shown in her description of what

she deemed an unnecessary slaughter and a disgraceful surrender, which is quoted in part in a subsequent chapter. Before and after the fight at Harper's Ferry she had much experience in the army hospitals; and the heroism and suffering which she beheld there greatly affected her.

A part of the winter of 1862-1863 she passed in Washington, and at that time made the acquaintance of many persons whose friendship she retained as long as she lived. Here her work in the hospitals was continued, and her familiarity with the incidents of the dreadful conflict was increased. The years 1862 and 1863 were to her a time of much mental disquietude as well as of physical discomfort. In a letter to Senator Morrill, of Vermont, written in June, 1863, she says:—

“Before Mrs. Morrill's letter was in the envelope a doubly pleasant interruption came at once in the form of ——— and a forwarded letter from you sent to me in Washington. I held it in my hand while my friend with great eloquence did his best to convince me that though the ‘Government

is imbecile,' 'Lincoln weak,' and 'Seward wicked,' this war is working out the regeneration and pacification of the country. I was willing to be convinced, yet was not. With all faith in the people, I have none in the men who are conducting this war. Why do they live unpunished while the land runs in blood and the darlings of our hearthstones are the lambs of sacrifice? . . . An old physician here says that I must cease going upstairs, that I must banish all thought of the seashore and go to the mountains. This makes me think of the Green Hills of Vermont, that I never saw; of the friends I love, in their peaceful home; and of the assurance, so spontaneously given, that there is a chamber in the wall held in reserve for me. To live and take life quietly, and to forget that there is a war, now to me seems the *ultima thule* of bliss."

A letter written from the Cary home in New York, in August, 1863, to another intimate friend shows how far she then was from feeling equal to either the tasks or the opportunities of her life. She was going on a journey southward, and she wrote:—

"You know that I have travelled considerably; and yet, even now, when I must go alone, I cannot

sleep, and get a blinding headache, — it seems such an undertaking to start into the world. ‘How absurd?’ You may well say so. But I can’t help it. I *cannot*, and I feel *so* lonesome. You fear that I ‘have not as much courage as I had to battle with life.’ ‘To battle’ is utterly at variance with my constitution of body and soul. I could, I have struggled for *others*; I never could for myself. It would be so much easier and better to die. I am sorry to find myself so utterly a woman. I wish that God had infused a little iron into my fibres. I know women strong with iron, piercing with steel. Then I should use my head and forget my heart. Then I should not disappoint my friends as I now do, — doing nothing that *tells*.”

The utter uncertainty as to where and how she was to live, in which she was kept during these years, materially increased the mental depression and the inability to do good work, expressed in this letter. What she hoped for and expected was a quiet home and freedom from pecuniary responsibilities. She had accepted the fate which deprived her of the human affection she stood in the greatest need of, and the devotion and companionship she was so well

fitted to enjoy and appreciate. She would have been content to be permitted to go quietly about her literary work in the city of New York; and for a few months just before the close of the war she cherished the belief that she was to have a permanent resting-place in a house that had been purchased in Fiftieth Street, in that city. Very soon, however, she saw this hope vanish, and the year 1865 confronted her with the necessity of returning once more to Harper's Ferry, the place of bitter memories, from whence in a few months she retreated once again to Washington, — this time to undertake serious and regular work for the "New York Independent."

Her first letter to that paper was written in March, 1866, one month before the first anniversary of Lincoln's death, and was designated "A Woman's Letter from Washington." This continued to be the title of her correspondence in that paper as long as she wrote for it. The letters speedily attracted general attention, and

became an interesting and valued feature of that popular and successful weekly journal. They were quoted in all the principal newspapers of the land, and the author of them was not long in finding herself the possessor of a national reputation as a writer on public affairs and events in Washington. Correspondence from Washington in the years before 1870 was a more important feature of the daily and weekly newspaper than it is even to-day. The political events of the period that included the impeachment trial of Andrew Johnson and the election of General Grant to the Presidency were almost as exciting as the battles that determined the fortunes of the Union. The leaders in Congress were men in whom the public felt an intense interest. Social life at the capital was brilliant; and the woman who could brightly describe not only political events and political leaders, but the social and personal life of the city of Washington, was sure of her audience.

Perhaps it is going too far to say that her

letters embrace sufficient material for a political history of the period during which she wrote ; but it is a safe assertion that no other series of Washington articles exists that conveys so brilliant and complete a picture of the political and social life of the American capital. Her acquaintance with the principal actors in the scenes she described was intimate and extensive, and her knowledge of the inner forces of politics and their workings was such as it is rarely possible for a woman to possess. Her intense patriotism, her hatred of shams, and her desire for purity and honor in the business of the State made her an unsparing critic of the shortcomings of men chosen to serve the people ; but she wrote always with the public welfare in view, and never from personal or selfish motives. She did not aim to be a mere transcriber and describer of what she heard and saw at the seat of Government, but constantly appealed to the reason and the patriotism of her readers. Thus her articles were often editorial

rather than narrative in their character; they were proclamations of her own thought and feeling on large questions, rather than reports of the acts or the words of others. They were not seldom masculine in their power of statement and of reasoning; but they were addressed not more to men than to women, whose interest in public affairs she always wished to stimulate, and whose right to exercise an influence upon the Government she emphatically asserted. Her writings upon public questions and the loyal attitude toward her own sex which she ever manifested will be more fully set forth in a subsequent chapter.

During the three years from the spring of 1866 until the spring of 1869 Mary Clemmer was in Washington for the greater part of each year. In 1869 she entered into an arrangement with Mr. Bowen, the proprietor of the "Independent," who had become the owner of the Brooklyn "Daily Union," which confined her very closely for three years to those papers, and

during much of the time to the office of the "Union." It was an arrangement that few women would care to attempt or would be able to carry out. Its character will be understood from the following reference which she made to it in a letter to a friend:—

"No woman can grow as a writer unless she grows as a thinker. Comparatively few appreciate the value of the discipline of trained faculties that may come through doing faithfully and well the drudgery, so to speak, of intellectual work. . . . I once entered into a written contract to write one column per day on any subject I was instructed to write on, for three years in advance, and at the end of that three years I had not for a single day failed of fulfilling my task, which included everything, from book reviews, comments on the Government and public men and affairs, to a common advertisement paragraph. You see that I did not miss the apprenticeship of literary work. . . . It was a toilsome time; but one positive satisfaction I feel in looking back is the consciousness of the entire command it gave me of all my mental forces. It cured me utterly of the mental perversity that waits for the inspiration of creative moods to do what is necessary to be done. No matter how great the

disinclination, whenever I had anything to do I did it, illy sometimes, sometimes better, but *I did it*, the very best I could at that moment. The final result was not deterioration in style, but a much higher aggregate of forces and of command."

During the third year of this arrangement she received a salary of five thousand dollars, probably at that time the largest amount ever paid to any woman for one year's services on a newspaper. The experience undoubtedly increased her power as a writer, but it must have been a heavy tax upon her vital forces. While thus employed she made her home in Cumberland Street, Brooklyn, where she kept house with her father and mother. In 1872 she returned to Washington, and resumed her "Woman's Letter" to the "Independent." But before doing this she performed what was to her a duty of love, in preparing the "Memorial of Alice and Phœbe Cary." This work, undertaken without prospect of remuneration, and at a time when she was mentally weary, was done

in a manner that added greatly to her literary reputation. Alice Cary had been to her almost a foster-mother, and with an exquisitely tender affection the debt of love was repaid. The memory of the admirable and interesting Phœbe also received gentle and just treatment at her hands. Her name was thus more closely associated with the Cary sisters after their death than it had been before. There is one passage in her sketch of Alice Cary which is worthy of reproduction here, not only for its value as a specimen of her literary style, but on account of the facts which it calls to mind concerning a lamented author:—

“It was in attempting to deal with more material and cruder forces that Alice Cary failed. In the more comprehensive sense, she never learned the world. In her novels, attempting to portray the faults and passions of men and women, we find her rudest work. Her mastery of quaintness, of fancy, of naturalistic beauty penetrated with pathetic longing, tinged with a clear psychological light, revealing the soul of nature and of human life from within,—all give to her unaffected utterances an inexpressible

charm. But the airy touch, the subtle insight, which translated into music the nature which she knew, stumbled and fell before the conflicting deformity of depraved humanity. The dainty imagination, which decked her poetic forms with such exquisite grace, could not stand in the stead of actual knowledge; usurping its prerogative, it degenerated into caricature. She held in herself the primal power to portray human life in its most complex relations and most profound significance. She missed the leisure and experience which together would have given her the mastery of that power. It wrestled with false, and sometimes unworthy, material. The sorrows and wrongs of woman, the injustice of man, the highest possibilities of human nature, — she longed to embody them all in the forms of enduring art. A life already nearly consumed, sickness, weariness, and death said ‘No.’ Her novels are strong with passages of intense feeling. We feel through them the surges of a wild, unchained power; but as broad, comprehensive portraitures of human life, as the finest exponents of the noble nature from which they emanated, they are often unworthy of her.”

There are many striking points of similarity in the characters of Alice Cary and Mary Clemmer; and much of what is truest and tenderest in the written life of Alice might now be said,

with equal truth and equal tenderness, of her who wrote it. So also of their literary achievements, it may be said that neither one attained her greatest success in fiction. With added years and larger opportunity both might have far surpassed what they accomplished in that field of literary effort. Reference has already been made to the novel "Eirene,—A Woman's Right," the first of her works to attract a considerable amount of attention. It was written during the first busy years of her newspaper work, and was in process of publication in "Putnam's Monthly Magazine" when that periodical suspended publication. It was issued in complete form by Putnam in 1871, and formed another milestone in her literary career. It showed advancing power in the description of natural scenes and in analysis of character. It was especially strong in its portrayal of war-scenes, as noted in a previous chapter. It was a story of American life, and the "Literary World" spoke of it as "a story which, in

some respects, deserves to rank among the best American novels. Its purpose—to show that it is possible for a young woman to make her way in the world without sacrificing her womanly modesty, and without joining the boisterous company of self-styled ‘reformers’—is a good one, and its general tone is pure and wholesome. . . . The example of its heroine will cheer and stimulate many discouraged women; and if her experiences are somewhat improbable, the lesson of her discipline is hardly the less effective. Regarded as a mere means of entertainment, ‘Eirene’ is far superior to the majority of American novels.”

In 1872 she began her third novel, under an engagement with the publishers of “Every Saturday,” in Boston. The title of this work was “His Two Wives.” The manner of its publication proved highly unfavorable to the success of the story, for it was written at the end of a telegraph wire, so to speak, and in the face of criticisms that would be distracting

if not disheartening to any author. Only novel-writers of long experience can safely venture upon the publication of their works chapter by chapter, with the printer waiting at the door. Had this novel been left in its author's hands when complete for revision and for condensation, its value as a literary performance and its success would doubtless have been enhanced. Nevertheless, "His Two Wives" was not an unsuccessful novel, and it retains its copyright value ten years after the first publication. A curiously mistaken notion was formed by some critics that this book was more or less a reflection of the personal life and experience of the author, a conclusion for which there was never the least justification. The story of the estrangement of a woman from her husband, of their separation, of his second marriage, and of the ultimate reunion of the husband and first wife bore no similarity to any circumstances in her own life, nor was she ever tempted to draw upon autobiographical

resources for material to use in the construction of her novels.

It was Mary Clemmer's dearest ambition to produce a novel which would completely meet the tests of art in fiction-writing. She had made much progress with another work which promised to reach a higher level of merit and a larger circulation than any book she had produced; but the interruptions and the delays arising from her physical prostration subsequent to 1878 rendered it impossible for her to gratify her own aspiration and the hopes of her friends in this regard. The novel upon which she was engaged when she was compelled to cease all literary effort was more than half finished, yet is in too fragmentary a state to warrant the publication of any part of it. The greatest satisfaction she ever experienced resulted from the publication of her collected poems in 1882 by J. R. Osgood & Co. This volume brought her warm and appreciative responses from critics whose opinions she cared

for, and made for her many new friends whose sympathetic words found their way to her heart. The record of her literary work will not be complete without a reference to the book entitled "Ten Years in Washington," which she wrote for a subscription firm in Hartford about 1870, and which had a very large sale. At the time of its publication it was quite the best book on the city of Washington that had been published, and it is still in much demand. It should also be mentioned that a volume of the poems of Alice and Phœbe Cary was edited by her simultaneously with the publication of the Memorial, that also being a labor of love; the proceeds of those works went wholly to relatives of the Cary sisters. Although Mary Clemmer fully understood the value of money, yet she was of quite too gentle and generous a nature to drive a bargain or even properly to guard her own pecuniary interests. If she had been less unselfish and more grasping, she might have added thousands of dollars to her income.

But self-sacrificing and unexact as she was, she earned a great deal of money. Her aggregate receipts from literary and newspaper work during the sixteen years from 1866 to 1882 were little if any less than fifty thousand dollars. Had she been able to exert herself during the ten years subsequent to 1874 as she did during the previous decade, she would have earned at least twenty-five thousand dollars more ; for lucrative engagements both in literature and journalism were constantly proffered to her, and reluctantly declined on account of her inability to work as she had done during her first years of literary activity.

CHAPTER V.

HER FRIENDSHIPS. — PERSONAL RELATIONS TO VARIOUS MEN AND WOMEN.

MARY CLEMMER had a genius for friendship — and for comradeship. The range of her sympathy was so wide, and her whole nature so charged with kindly and helpful feeling, that with men and women of sincere minds she readily formed enduring attachments. She required in others honesty, candor, good nature, and good sense, and when these qualities were present the title to her respect and regard was easily established. The distinctions based upon wealth or any difference of material condition did not affect her personal feeling toward those whom she deemed morally worthy. To the weak, the inferior, the very old, and the very young, she was ever compassionate and indul-

gent. Indeed, in the lives of most people she saw something to excite sympathy or sorrow, and her sensitive heart was constantly wrung by the weakness and the failure that she beheld in the world. Such a nature naturally drew to itself large stores of sympathy and regard from others; and as the joint result of her power of personal sympathy and the power of her writing, it can be truly said that she had “a host of friends.”

If, however, the way was thus open for large numbers of persons to call themselves her friends, and to be regarded by her as such, the number of those who could come into her inner personal life was always very small. There many would gladly have felt themselves called, but few were capable of being chosen. During many years her confidence and regard were especially sought by men of talent and power, who recognized the rare delicacy of her sympathy and the largeness of her intellectual comprehension. With such would-be sharers

in her spiritual bounty and mental companionship she often found herself a sort of mother-confessor; and thus she became the trusted counsellor and confidante of not a few, to whom it was impossible for her ever to hold any other relation. This was equally true of many women who sought her personal confidence and love. One result of this wide extension of her sympathy was to give her a most remarkable knowledge of the lives and characters of men and women. Indeed, there probably was no other woman in the United States who had (wholly without purpose or desire on her own part) seen into the very inmost recesses of so many hearts and lives as she had. The result of all this knowledge was to render it impossible for her to cherish illusions in regard to human character; but it seemed also to make her only more considerate and regardful of the weaknesses and the limitations of her fellow-beings. How much good she did, through the noble and helpful influence she exerted upon the lives of both

men and women about her, can never be told. There was a sacredness in many of her friendships which would render unseemly anything more than a general reference to them here.

Of the intimate personal friendships of her life, by far the closest and the most alterative, in its influence upon her mind and her career, was the relation with Alice Cary. How important this relation was to her has been partially set forth in previous chapters. It is so completely stated in what she has written of her best woman-friend that quotation from that volume without comment is quite sufficient to furnish all the explanation and the emphasis which should be put upon that supreme friendship here. The similarity in their characters, in their tastes, in the conditions of their lives, and in their fortunes, as writers, was remarkable. Almost every word of the following passages from Mary Clemmer's Memorial of Alice Cary is as true of the writer as of the one of whom it was written:—

“As I sit here thinking of her, I realize how futile will be any effort of mine to make a memorial worthy of my friend. The woman in herself so far transcended any work of art that she ever wrought, any song (sweet as her songs were) that she ever sung, that even to attempt to put into words what she was, seems hopeless. Yet it is an act of justice, no less than of love, that one who knew her in the sanctuary of her life should at least partly lift the veil which ever hung between the lovely soul and the world, that the women of this land may see more clearly the sister whom they have lost, who in what she was herself was so much more than in what she in mortal weakness was able to do, — at once an example and glory to American womanhood. It must ever remain a grief to those who knew her and loved her best, that such a soul as hers should have missed its highest earthly reward; but if she can still live on as an incentive and a friend to those who remain, she at least is comforted now for all she suffered and all she missed here.

“The life of one woman who has conquered her own spirit, who, alone and unassisted, through the mastery of her own will, has wrought out from the hardest and most adverse conditions a pure, sweet, and noble life, placed herself among the world’s workers, made her heart and thought felt in ten thousand unknown homes, — the life of one such woman is worth more to all living women, proves

more for the possibilities of womanhood, for its final and finest advancement, its ultimate recognition and highest success, than ten thousand theories or eloquent orations on the theme. Such a woman was Alice Cary. Mentally and spiritually she was especially endowed with the rarest gifts; but no less the lowliest of all her sisters may take on new faith and courage from her life. It may not be for you to sing till the whole land listens, but it is in your power, in a narrower sphere, to emulate the traits which brought the best success to her in her wider life.

“Many personally impress us with the fact that they have wrought into the forms of art the very best in themselves. Whatever they may have embodied in form, color, or thought, we are sure that it is the most that they have to give, and in giving that, they are by so much themselves impoverished. In their own souls they hold nothing rarer in reserve. The opposite was true of Alice Cary. You could not know her without learning that the woman in herself was far greater and sweeter than anything that she had ever produced. You could not sit by her side, listening to the low, slow outflow of her thought, without longing that she might yet find the condition which would enable her to give it a fuller and finer expression than had ever yet been possible. You could not feel day by day the blended strength, generosity, charity, and tenderness of the living

woman, without longing that a soul so complete might yet make an impression on the nation to which it was born, that could never fade away. Her most powerful trait, the one which seemed the basis of her entire character, was her passion for justice, for in its intensity it rose to the height of a passion. Her utmost capacity for hate went out toward every form of oppression. If she ever seemed overwrought, it was for some wrong inflicted on somebody, very rarely on herself. She wanted everything, the meanest little bug at her feet, to have its chance, *all* the chance of its little life. That this so seldom could be, in this distorted world, was the abiding grief of her life. Early she ceased to suffer chiefly for herself, but to her latest breath she suffered for the sorrows of others. Phœbe truly said, 'Constituted as she was, it was not possible for her to help taking upon herself not only all the sorrows of her friends, but in some sense the tribulation and anguish that cometh upon every son and daughter of Adam. She was even unto the end planning great projects for the benefit of suffering humanity, and working with her might to be helpful to those near her, and when it seemed impossible that one suffering herself such manifold afflictions could think of the needs of others.'

"It was this measureless capacity to know and feel everything that concerns human nature, this pity for all, this longing for justice and mercy to the

lowest and the meanest thing that could breathe and suffer — this largeness lifting her above all littleness — this universality of soul, which made her in herself great as she was tender. Such a soul could not fail to feel with deepest intensity every sorrow and wrong inflicted upon her own sex. She loved woman with a fulness of sympathy and tenderness never surpassed. She felt pity for their infirmities and pride in their successes, feeling each to be in part her own. Believing that in wifehood, motherhood, and home woman found her surest and holiest estate, all the more for this belief her whole being rebelled against the caste in sex which would proscribe the development of any individual soul, which would lay a single obstacle in the way of a toiling and aspiring human being, which would degrade her place in the human race, because, with all her aspiration, toil, and suffering, she wore the form of woman. Every effort having for its object the help, advancement, and full enfranchisement of woman from every form of injustice in church, state, education, or at home, had her completest sympathy and co-operation."

A friend whose death deeply affected her was Samuel Bowles. During his last illness she was moved to address a poem to him, and it was published in the Springfield "Republican"

almost simultaneously with her injury in 1878. It appears in her collected poems, page 61. In the first letter she wrote after that most unfortunate accident she thus referred to the dead journalist:—

“That day when one lay senseless just this side of the gate that did not open at last for her, a few hours later it opened for him who had long been her friend. When she returned to a consciousness of this life he was no longer in it. He knows all now, — the mystery of death and of life; but how vacant seems his special sphere of activity without him. There are people who by no possibility of thought can be made to seem dead, and Samuel Bowles is one of them. His acute intelligence, his salient mental contacts, his keen, comprehensive, yet sympathetic vision, to one who knew them well, can never become unknown or even unconscious qualities. When a very young girl at school, my teacher (a man who knew and loved him) sent one of my school compositions to Samuel Bowles. He printed it in the Springfield ‘Republican,’ and it was the first line of mine ever printed. Had I a daughter, I would see that no immature lines of hers were ever put into print; yet all the same I have to thank those weak young verses for a friendship as long

as life and stronger than death. Samuel Bowles became a mental force in my thought, which he will remain as long as I have the power to think at all. Not that I believed him always right; but wrong, I could honor him more than I could a man of weaker perception, of less fearless independence, of less personal integrity. I make no attempt now to analyze his mental characteristics. In this first utterance of mine since his passing from us I only lay this little blossom of my gratitude upon his honored name. . . . In his measurement of other minds his mental perception was unerring. I have never known another man of his power who began to be at once as just and as generous to those who yet had all their way to make, in whom average eyes as yet saw nothing. He grew to fame. He fell from health. Bearing lance and spear, he fell wounded in the thick of the battle. But not till he had grown tired of it all, and felt, bravely as he fought, that nothing was quite worth the struggle. He passed at mid-day, a man old before his time. Yet the greatness of his mental sympathy never declined, and the greater tenderness of his heart reigned supreme to the last."

Among the relationships which greatly affected the external conditions of her life her long-time friendship with the late Hon. Portus

Baxter and his wife, of Vermont, was one of the most important. Mr. Baxter was an influential and active member of the National House of Representatives from the northern district of Vermont during the war and for some time afterward. His wife was a woman of much force of character and no little executive capacity. When Mary Clemmer came to Washington in 1863 to undertake regular and systematic literary and journalistic work, she found in Mr. and Mrs. Baxter a kindly friendship and protection of which she stood in much need. This relationship subsequently became a very close one, and for some years she was regarded almost as one of their own children. For a number of seasons she resided under the same roof with them in Washington, and during several of the summers between 1865 and 1874 she spent a good deal of time at the family home in Derby Line, Vermont. Mrs. Baxter died in 1882, her husband having passed away some years earlier; and one of the kindly tasks that Mary Clemmer was

compelled to leave undone was the preparation of a brief memorial of this lady. During the war Mrs. Baxter had been very efficient and active in ministering to the wounded and sick soldiers belonging to her State, and she was held in lasting esteem and regard by them. In this merciful work at the hospitals and camps of the Union Army Mary Clemmer often participated when she was in Washington, and it was under these circumstances that a strong tie was formed between them. When the cherished prospect of a home of her own seemed to vanish from her sight, and nothing remained for her but to carry her own burden and to provide for those who looked to her for support, she found in the home of the Baxters some needed rest and a temporary refuge from the world that with all its hard conditions often seemed about to overwhelm her. Mrs. Baxter continued to make her home in Washington during the winter seasons after the withdrawal of her husband from Congressional life, and until

the end of her days. In the social life of the capital she was for several years closely identified with Mary Clemmer, and to many of their friends they sometimes seemed almost like mother and daughter. This relationship became less close, but lost nothing of its friendly character, when in 1875 Mary Clemmer determined to bring her own father and mother to Washington and to establish a home for them there.

A relationship which may with propriety be classed among her personal friendships was that which existed between her and the publisher of the newspaper to which she was for twenty years a regular contributor, — Mr. Henry C. Bowen. It is due to this gentleman to say that while he is a very able, positive, and exact man in all business dealings, his treatment of the writer of "A Woman's Letter" was that of a friend rather than a mere purveyor of valuable matter for his thousands of readers. Doubtless her contributions to the "Independent" were

worth all that was paid for them, and the remuneration was large ; but Mary Clemmer felt, and had reason to know, that in the proprietor of the "Independent" she had a faithful and loyal friend, and she ever regarded him as such. It is due to him also to say that what she wrote of criticism of public men and comment on public affairs was published as it was written, even when the opinions expressed conflicted with the editorial course of the newspaper. It would have been impossible for her to continue her writing had she not been left wholly free to say what she thought and felt ; but there were times when her letters required courage and a disregard of the subscription-list in the home office as well as on the part of the woman who said her say at the seat of Government. The religious newspaper, more than other journals, is apt to be pestered by the obstreperousness of the subscriber who wishes to read nothing that does not conform to and confirm his own preconceived opinions.

It has already been stated that a very warm friendship existed between Mary Clemmer and the venerable senator from Vermont, Hon. Justin S. Morrill, and his family. This began as early as 1862, and continued until her death. She was often a guest at their house in Strafford, Vermont, and in Washington. In her letters to the "Independent" she repeatedly paid earnest and hearty tribute to the integrity, purity, and kindliness of his character; and a part of the last article she ever published in the "Independent," written when she was very ill, and almost prostrated with the rapidly increasing paralysis, was devoted to testifying to her regard for him. In it she said:—

"Senator Justin S. Morrill, of Vermont, and Mrs. Morrill issued cards of invitation for April 14, bearing the dates 1810–1884, marking the birthday and age of Senator Morrill. The birthday party of Senator Morrill has been an annual event for several years. The first one was masqueraded by his personal friends, who, uninvited, crowded his house, filling it with flowers, gifts, and blessings. Each

year, since then, Senator Morrill has given a birthday party of his own, bidding his most intimate friends, making it one of the most delightful occurrences of the entire social season, an occasion which can bring but one sorrowful thought, — that each one must make one the less. Senator Morrill is not only a typical American, but an American senator of the highest type.

“No senator of the United States moves on the even tenor of his way fuller of years or deserved honors than the senior senator from Vermont. Free from the angularities and discrepancies which mark the manners and scholarship of so many ‘self-made’ men, Senator Morrill is a self-educated man whom the most lavishly dowered may gladly take for an example. He has the repose of manner and the symmetry of character which many believe to be the sole inheritance of an indulgent fortune. When a boy, he was placed as a clerk in a country store. His long winter evenings, for years, were devoted to laborious study. In due time he mastered Greek and Latin, and later the higher prizes of classical scholarship. At forty years of age he retired from trade, the possessor of an honorable competency. Shortly after, he was elected to Congress, and in the House of Representatives and in the Senate has served his country consecutively as a legislator ever since. His name is associated with some of the most important political financial measures ever

adopted by Congress, while he is also regarded as one of the most scholarly and refined of senators. His home, one of the most delightful in Washington, is the centre of everything best in our American home life; and thus, full of years and full of honors, surrounded by devoted friends, one of the best of American senators, with mind and hands still full of thought and love for his country, he is serenely passing on to the higher life and larger reward."

It was thus that Mary Clemmer was wont to speak of men in public life whose motives and whose acts she respected; and it was not singular that after she had passed away, the friend whom she thus vouched for should have contributed a memorial article to the "Independent," as he did, commenting on her character and literary work, and expressing the high degree of respect which he entertained for her.

A list of all the public men who were glad to call themselves her friends and to enjoy the approbation which she so freely gave whenever she could find aught to approve in their public conduct would be a long one. During his

later years Mr. Sumner manifested a hearty appreciation of some of her articles and often conversed with her on public affairs. Vice-President Wilson always regarded her pen as a most important influence on the side of good government and the ascendancy of the party of which he was a leader. During the years when he possessed power and popularity Mr. Colfax was glad to be her correspondent, and he always endeavored to retain her confidence and respect. When at one time in his career General Garfield felt his standing as a public man imperilled, he exerted himself strenuously, and gave her the most solemn personal assurances of his rectitude, in order not to forfeit the good opinion she had entertained of him. His successor testified frankly and cordially to his appreciation of her just and kindly comments on his course as President of the United States. Of course one who wrote so plainly and so forcibly of men in public life could not always maintain friendly relations with all whom she knew. The mere

self-seeker in official place who wished only for praise in the public press, and that continually, was not well qualified even for personal acquaintance with her. Occasionally her outspoken condemnation of what she thought to be wrong secured for her the active animosity of some knave who felt the halter of political defeat tightening about his precious neck. But she never lost a friend who was worthy to be her friend, and whose friendship was really established. It was quite marvellous that one who spoke out so freely as she did in her letters retained the regard of so many persons. It was not uncommon for her to remain on very kindly terms with women whose husbands or fathers she had fearlessly criticised and perhaps severely castigated for some of their political acts. This was possible because every one knew that her motives were always good and that she wrote only what she felt she must write. When she wrote of social matters in Washington she always sought to be impersonal, and her descrip-

tions of social contacts were sometimes very amusing. The following is from a letter written in 1877 : —

“By and by I shall put on my richest robe, my prettiest bonnet, my fairest gloves, and sally forth to see the world. Aunt Magnificent will see me, and say, the first minute she gets the chance, that my clothes cost too much for one in my circumstances. For her part, she would like to know where I get the money to pay for them. Some people are so fond of dress! etc. I shall meet Miss Cockatoo, as I met her the other day.

“‘My dear,’ she cries, ‘how glad I am to see you!’

“From her lips flow these honeyed accents; but her eyes are scanning me from top to toe, with the measuring look which marks so many women as underbred. She is deciding whether the velvet in my flounce is ‘cotton-backed;’ whether the lace in my *jabot* is real or a very nice imitation; whether the cut of my overskirt is of the latest style. As she takes the inventory, she exclaims: —

“‘Have you been well this long time? *Do* come and see me. Really, who did cut that overskirt?’

“I meet Mrs. Pry, who sets her eyes upon me with a gaze of mysterious significance.

“ ‘Poor child! Are you happy?’ she exclaims, in a pathetic quaver.

“ ‘Never happier.’

“ Mrs. Pry looks incredulous.

“ ‘You look happy, but looks are deceiving,’ she says, dejectedly. She is ‘sure that I have had an unfortunate heart affair.’ She has talked it over separately with every one of her dear five hundred friends. She is not going to have her imaginations refuted by the comfortable-looking person before her.

“ ‘Are you *sure* you are happy?’ she sighs.

“ ‘Perfectly sure.’

“ ‘I don’t believe it,’ she cries to Aunt Magnificent. ‘It’s as plain as day. It’s all put on.’

“ I meet Miss Statesman. I have criticised her father as a public man. Miss Statesman fixes upon me a look of intense animosity. I rather like her for it. What would a daughter be good for who did not ‘stick up’ for her father? The funny part of the enraged little nudge she gives me is its contrast to her features — that thick crust of self-conceit which makes her fancy she punishes me, and makes her blind to the fact of my utter amusement. I meet the woman who ‘hates the woman who writes;’ the woman who ‘adores’ the woman who writes. I meet the feminine patriot, ready to weep for her country; the ‘female’ politician, who talks loud for her candidate; the fine lady, who

never lifts her voice; the vulgar one, who never lowers it; the man of the world, with more money and leisure than he knows what to do with (usually a European); the man of the people, trying to do a little 'social duty' and making very hard work of it; the man who likes to be in the newspapers, and the man who is 'mad' because he has been in them. And true and tender hearts I meet, a few, with that exquisite tact which is charity, that never intrudes on privacies, that never assails the absent, that never inspects your clothes, that never probes your sensitive bone; but touches upon all themes — life, love, art, poetry, politics, religion — with that keen intelligence, that large, fine sympathy which only can make conversation an education, an inspiration, and a delight. Meet such an one — be it in splendid hall or in the lowliest room — you have found the highest society. You find your brief and hurried day is long enough for courtesy, for self-command, for elegance, and for sweetness. You have found your 'accurate mate,' and, suddenly, to live is delicious."

These words truly reflect the character of the woman who wrote them. As she wrote so she lived in the world, and her social relations were infused with the spirit here expressed. The kindness of her heart was seen in her face.

The winning smile, the sympathetic voice and manner, the desire to speak of *yourself* and not *herself*, the kind and cheerful words of greeting and farewell, all contributed to make her society attractive to those who entered it. Her generosity of spirit and the utter frankness and openness of her nature, together with her spiritual penetration and good sense, rendered her conversation charming, especially when with strangers, to whom she seemed "always to know just what to say." Her power in this direction was shown at the Monday receptions, when her parlors were crowded with the heterogeneous company of callers who flocked to meet her on the day when residents of Capitol Hill in Washington are usually accessible to their friends. To talk with a hundred people in one afternoon, for the most part strangers to each other, and often seen then for the first time by the hostess, and to say not simply pleasant things but the *right* thing to each, and to send all away carrying kind and agreeable feelings,

is a power more often absent from than present in the drawing-rooms of the capital.

One other selection from a letter written after the accident in 1878 is of interest because it shows what a familiar tone she could use in her published correspondence, and explains why it was that thousands who never saw her thought of her as their friend.

“Everybody knows now ‘for sure’ that I am not strong-minded. Thus I find myself relieved suddenly of a rather fatiguing reputation. It comforts me even now to think that the next time that man down in South Carolina who writes me scolding letters when I fail to write something that suits him, — the next time he is moved to do so he may refrain. ‘Poor thing!’ perhaps he will say. ‘What’s the use? She is *not* strong-minded. She jumped out of a carriage.’ I have come to the conclusion that it is well to have something dreadful happen occasionally, if it is not so dreadful but that one may live through it. You find yourself suddenly snatched out of the mighty current of life and thrown one side. The single thread of being you seemed to hold firmly has slipped from your hand. You do not even hold one little thread in this multi-form woof of vast life, so swiftly woven. *You are

detached and cast aside. The faithful hand that, despite all pain, all loss, all grief, never failed you, or those it served, lies idle at last. There is no task mighty enough to quicken it to toil. It may work again some healing day. Nevertheless, this vacant hour but foretells that last of inevitable waiting, when all endeavor shall lie behind, and, in the hush of awful expectancy, you will wait your first glimpse of the new heavens and the new earth. In how brief a space you learn that you are not necessary, that no one is necessary to life. Its vast processions move on as surely. Its fateful affairs grow, tangle, culminate, shiver into atoms the fates of men and of empires. Human experience—birth, growth, love, anguish, fruition, failure, death—there is room for them all in the brief, brief years which measure one little human life. Whoever comes, whoever goes, they remain the same forever. One pulse the less in the mighty respiration—what is that? You know what this life, so multi-form, so marvellous, is. Whatever it may be to you, you are sure that you are nothing to life. You are as ready for new relations as if you had already crossed the boundary of the spheres. There comes to your door from that outlying world one whom you hardly knew, whose life you never thought touched yours at scarcely a single point. Her lips tremble with tender speech. Her hands are full of flowers. She leaves them with you, with the dew of Heaven

and the fragrance of all the summers filtering from their hearts. Men whose paths along the rough highway lead far from yours come with words of honest brotherhood, of human sympathy, that you can never forget. You find that hearts with utterly different fates in human suffering yearn toward each other, after all. You accept new possessions. You enter into a larger and closer inheritance. Thus some day, not very far on, I shall go forth again feeling sure that I have taken a new lease upon life, that I have taken a stronger hold upon my kind. I loved you always, dear hearts ; but never quite so tenderly as I do to-day. Before I begin again, let me whisper to you, to whom I cannot write more nearly, whom in this world I never expect to see, that your blessed messages from afar mean all that's best to me in life. Remember always that as I am yours, you are mine."

CHAPTER VI.

LOVE OF COUNTRY. — EXPERIENCE DURING THE WAR. —
EXPERIENCE AS A WRITER ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

THE devotion to justice and regard for the truth which pervaded all her thought and action found their most spirited and admirable development in Mary Clemmer in the love she felt for her country. Her patriotism, which was naturally a very strong sentiment, was greatly intensified by her experiences at Harper's Ferry and Washington during the war, and subsequently by her acquaintance with public men and affairs at the capital. The preservation of the Union through the triumph of the armies of the Union was to her, during the continuance of the conflict between the North and the South, the one grand duty to be performed. When that duty was done she wished

to see the government of the restored nation administered honestly and decently, in the interest of the whole people of the United States, and not in the interest of a small office-holding and office-seeking class. To secure these results she used her pen vigorously, fearlessly, yet always with the wish to be kind as well as just in what she wrote. She strove, too, never to be unwomanly in her judgments of public matters and public men; but she felt that when the welfare of the nation was at stake, it was as much a woman's right and duty to speak out with frankness and honesty what she felt and knew, as it was the right and duty of any man. In reviewing the character and force of her political writings it should never be forgotten that she was present during one of the most exciting and unfortunate (for the Union) of the battles of the war, and had a personal knowledge of what the war meant which was possessed by hardly any other woman who wrote much on political topics. Her descrip-

tion of the contest at Harper's Ferry, contained in one of the chapters in "Eirene," gives a graphic picture of a memorable scene, and of her emotions while she observed it:—

"We had been expecting to hear the Rebel guns for a week. From the moment that we learned certainly that the Confederates were in possession of Frederick, that they had destroyed the railroad bridge at Monocacy, that they had entirely surrounded us, we knew that they were only awaiting their own convenience to attack Maryland Heights. 'If we can only keep the Heights,' we said, as we looked with anxious eyes to this green fastness above us, — 'if we can only keep the Heights, we are safe.' We could not forget that Jackson said when last here, 'Give me Maryland Heights and I will defy the world.'

"Of what avail would be the force in battle-line on Bolivar Heights three miles away, of the array of infantry lining the road to Charlestown, the earthworks, the rifle-pits, the batteries, — of what avail all, if from the other side Jackson ascended Maryland Heights and turned our own guns against us?

"I had just given the boys their breakfast last Saturday morning, September 13, when the quick, cruel ring of musketry cutting the air made them

start up in their beds. I ran out upon the hill in the rear of the hospital overlooking the town. On one side was the Shenandoah bounded by Loudon Heights, on the other the Potomac, with the Heights of Maryland, — a high, green, precipitous wall towering above its opposite shore.

“Jackson had come, — come to the only spot where he could effectually besiege our stronghold. I strained my eyes through the blue of that transcendent morning to the sunlit woods upon the mountain-top echoing with death. Volley after volley shivered the air, and with it the bodies of men. At first the report was far up on the mountain summit, then it drew nearer, rattling louder, and I knew that the enemy were advancing. I heard their dreadful war-cry and caught the flash of their bayonets piercing the green woods.

“Suddenly the cry grew fainter, the resounding guns seemed muffled in the thicket, and a loud shout from the soldiers of the Republic told that they were driving back the foe. The sounds of battle palpitated to and fro, the double line of bayonets glanced advancing, retreating, while I listened with suspended breath. The fight on the mountains was to decide our fate. Below the artillerists were at work. The great guns pointed upward, shells screamed and hissed, tearing the green woods, poisoning the pure ether with sulphurous smoke. Ambulances began to wind down the steep mountain road with their

freight of wounded. Many of these brave soldiers were so shattered that they could only be carried on blankets, and the sad procession was swelled by the bodies of two of our artillerists shattered to death at their guns.

“Traitors gathered upon the crest of Camp Hill to watch the fight; cravens squatted on stones and stood in groups, with their hands in their pockets, estimating the probabilities of the battle.

“‘The Yankees can never lick our boys, ’tain’t no use tryin’; we’ll get the hill, of course we will. Don’t our boys go where they have a mind to? Did n’t they march into Maryland? Who hindered? Haven’t they walked into Pennsylvania? Yankees can’t stop them!’ they said. Beside these creatures stood women, watching, trembling for the safety of their homes; little children, frightened by the fight; young girls, to whom the fortunes of war had given temporary abode in this besieged spot; loyal old men, who sat lamenting over the troubles of their country.

“It was just noon when the sudden cessation of musketry firing called me away from my work to the open window. The batteries were still sending shells thick and fast into the woods; the men at their guns seemed as eager as ever, when for the first time in my life I doubted the evidence of my senses. Without warning the firing suddenly ceased. Tents were struck, cannon were spiked and sent

tumbling down the mountain gorge, bayonets flashed out from the woods, long columns of men began moving down the mountain defile. Oh, saddest, most disgraceful sight of all, — the flag which waved from that mountain-top, our signal of freedom and hope, they tore it down!

“ ‘They have given up the mountain! They have given up the mountain!’ rang from mouth to mouth in every accent of terror, joy, and despair.

“In fifteen minutes Maryland Heights was deserted, dumb. The gleaming tents were prone, the exultant banners gone. Far down the mountain-side our hurrying hosts were flying from the spot, which at the utmost cost of life they should have defended. Already the pontoon bridge was black with returning thousands. The street was alive with the wildest excitement. Men, women, and children were running in every direction, with only one sentence on their tongue, —

“ ‘The Heights are surrendered!’

“Three thousand soldiers were marching back in disgrace and defeat. As they came wearily on, they heard from every direction, —

“ ‘Is this the way you defend us?’

“ ‘Do you want women and children killed in their homes?’

“From the ranks came one curse, long and deep, ‘If we had not had a traitor for a leader, we should not have surrendered!’

“ In less than an hour after, quick and sharp from the lower ridge of Maryland Heights sounded the enemies’ rifles. Their cannon were not ready, but they came and fired volley after volley down into the narrow streets of the town, upon unarmed citizens, upon women and children. Thus the Southern chivalry began their work. We knew that they would erect their batteries in the night, that the Sabbath morning would dawn with the missiles of death pouring down upon us from each side, from both mountain-tops.

“ It dawned, that memorable Sabbath morning, September 14, 1862, in superlative splendor. Sunshine, balm, and beauty suffused the august mountains and the blue ether which ensphered us. All were unheeded while we waited the terrors of the day. We had lost the Heights. Cowardice or treason had caused the surrender of our only stronghold of defence. All night the enemy had been erecting batteries on the hills of Maryland and the heights of Loudon. We were surrounded. There was no corner of safety for unarmed men, for women or children, or for the sick or wounded. They could do nothing but look toward the frowning mountain walls uprising on either side and await the storm of fire about to burst from their summits.

“ Through that long, azure, golden morning, — a morning so absolutely perfect in the blending of its elements, in its fusion of fragrance, light, and color,

that it can never die out of my consciousness, — I sat by this open window making bandages. Directly before me across the Shenandoah towered the London Mountain. Where the great trees had fallen on its summit I knew the enemy was at work ranging his batteries. The red flags of our hospitals, hoisted high above their chimneys, streamed toward this foe, imploring mercy for our sick and wounded ones. The stony streets of Camp Hill throbbed with unwonted life. Many soldiers were hurrying to and from the hillside spring with their black coffee-kettles, eager to get their day's supply of fresh water before the bombshells grew thicker in the air. Many strangers, refugees from Martinsburg and Winchester, paced up and down the street. Citizens at the corners discussed the probabilities of the day with troubled faces. Young girls and matrons toiled up the steep Camp Hill side to our hospital, laden with baskets of delicacies, mindful of the suffering soldiers and all their fears. Poor contrabands stood in groups talking in incoherent terror of Jackson, and of the certainty of their being 'coted and sold down South.' In a high yard opposite a company of little children were rolling in the grass amid the late-blooming flowers, utterly unconscious of the impending storm about to burst upon their innocent heads. The atmosphere was pierced with the deep trill of insect melody. Golden butterflies flickered by me on flame-like wings. The thistle-down sailed

on through seas of sunshine. The spider spun his web in the tree beside my window. The roll of the rivers rhymed with the music of the air. Nature rested in deep content. The day, serene enough for Paradise, murmured, 'Peace.' God, from the benign heavens, said, 'It is my Sabbath.'

" 'Whiz, whir, hiss, roar, bang, crash, smash!'

" Helpless men started in their beds. The house shook to its foundations. Heaven and earth seemed to collapse. The deafening roar rolling back to the mountains died in the deeper roar bursting from the summits. All the Rebel batteries opened on us at once. Those on Loudon faced us, and our hospitals were under their heaviest fire. The shock of the tremendous cannon near the house sent me off my chair in spite of my aspirations after a sublime courage. I am not a hero. I wish I were. It is extremely mortifying upon a stupendous occasion to find one's self unequal to its sublimity. I was pervaded with horror even more than with fright. The profanation of man seemed awful. God's Sabbath, the divine repose of Nature, invaded, outraged by the impotent fury of men. I am afraid of bombshells. I am more afraid of them now than I was before I heard or felt their sulphurous current hissing near my very head. If there is a sound purely fiendish this side of the region of the lost, it is the scream and shriek of a bombshell. No matter how many tear the air, each demon of a shell persists in a

diabolical individuality of its own, and refuses to hiss or shriek precisely like one of its neighbors.

“ I suffered most through my imagination. Each dreadful thing that tore the air I thought must burst into the room and take off the head of one of my boys. They poured into the garden beside us, they struck the pavement before us, they tore up the earth beneath us, they threw the sacred soil upon the very beds of our wounded, but they did not hit us. O futile Rebel shells, what rare restraining angel withheld your fire and deadened your destruction beneath the eaves of our lintel !

“ Two hours ! and I had grown so accustomed to this unwonted thunder that I was able to go from cot to cot as if no battle were going on. Another hour, and I had nearly ceased to be conscious of it amid the newly wounded, moaning for succor in the ward.”

Further on she describes the entrance of the Rebel army into Harper's Ferry and the intensity of her own humiliation as she witnessed the sight. Her picture of Stonewall Jackson among his men is very well done : —

“ Not half an hour had passed after the surrender when the Rebel army entered the town. It was a sad, a humiliating, a disgraceful sight. While the bombardment lasted hope did not quite die. Help

might come; the last thrill of hope kept us from despair. I saw the first mounted ensign pass the earthworks which had been guarded so long by loyal soldiers. I saw him flaunt aloft the bloody stars and bars and the palmetto flag; I saw him drag the banner of the Union in the dust. It was a sight that I could not bear. After it came Jackson's entire army. No waving flags, outstretched hands, no murmurs of joy, no woman's welcome greeted it.

“ They peered into the windows with curious eyes, — some of these mounted cavaliers, — but the few faces that they saw were tear-dimmed; the bitterest tears of a lifetime greeted them in at least one house. If I were to live a thousand lives, that moment in its poignant consciousness of shame, defeat, degradation, could never be repeated, — that moment in which for the first time I saw the flag of my country dragged in the dust of the road, followed by a triumphant host, that host my own countrymen. First came the cavalry, the ‘flower,’ the ‘chivalry,’ the aristocracy of the South, spurred and mounted like the knights of old, each man in his spirit and person, in his dauntless daring, in his insane devotion to one idea, repeating the princely crusade of the Middle Ages. They look what they are, high-blooded, high-bred, infatuated men. Every eye burns with passion. Careless, reckless even of life, all that they value risked on a single stake, they ask only to win or to

die. Unlike the infantry, they know what they are fighting for. They will tell you without the asking. 'I am fighting for Southern rights, for my home, for my niggers.' Their intercourse with those whom they consider equals is marked by a lavish generosity, a courtly courtesy, but to inferiors they are supercilious, tyrannical, and often brutal. They hold a slave as scarcely more than a beast, yet they rate him higher, and would choose him as a personal associate sooner than they would a Yankee.

"After these impartial leaders marched their slaves, their white slaves, true serfs, fighting in the rear for eternal serfdom, which they are taught to believe is Southern rights. On, helter-skelter, crowding the street, swarmed a worse than Egyptian plague! Barefooted, half-naked, foul, flouting their dirty banners, gazing eagerly about with their starved faces, intent only on plunder, and on finding something to eat. Thus the deliverers of Maryland, regenerators of the nation, entered Harper's Ferry, September 15, 1862.

"While the officers were dashing down the road, and the half-naked privates begging at every door, General Jackson stood sunning himself, and talking with a group of soldiers across the street, — a plain man in plain clothes, with an iron face, and iron-gray hair. Only by his bearing could he be distinguished from his men. He stood as if the commander of all, marked only by the mysterious insignia

of individual presence, by which we know instinctively the genius from the clown. No golden token of rank gleamed on his rusty clothes, none of the shining symbols of which, alas! too many of our officers are so ridiculously fond, that they seem unconscious how disgraceful is this glitter of vanity. They were nowhere visible on old Stonewall's person. When General Jackson had drunk at the pump, and talked at his leisure, he mounted his flame-colored horse, and rode down the street at the jog of a comfortable farmer carrying a bag of meal to mill.

“As he passed I could not but wonder how many times he had prayed on Saturday night, before commencing his hellish Sabbath work. His old servant says that ‘when massa prays four times in de night, he knows de devil’ll be to pay next day.’ And I am very sure that there was a large number of devils at work above Harper’s Ferry on Sunday, September 14, 1862.”

Even the tempest and turmoil of battle, however, were less harrowing than the sufferings of the wounded and dying soldiers which she was compelled to witness, and which she did all in her power to alleviate. A short time after the surrender at Harper’s Ferry she wrote: —

“To me these are the saddest days of the war; there is so little alleviation to the awful suffering which surrounds me. These men are dying for lack of physicians, nurses, and care. If twenty other women were as busy as I am, preparing broths and cordials, walking and watching from morning till night, there would not then be enough to care for these men. We hear much of the rights of women. It seems to me no woman need question her right to ask what her work is in days like these. I do all that I can, and it is so little. I feel as if I would give my very life for these men, and yet I cannot save them. I can scarcely look up without seeing one carried forth on a stretcher, wrapped in his blue overcoat, without a coffin, without a prayer, laid in a shallow grave scooped out from among the stones on the hill. They die so fast there is scarcely room for any more. Their graves reach from the hill-top down to the road. Their names are all given to me, even when I cannot attend them personally. The most heart-breaking duty comes after they are at rest. The vestibule and closets of the little Lutheran church standing midway between Bolivar and Harper’s Ferry, and now filled with wounded, are piled with the knapsacks and haversacks of dying and dead soldiers. I go to these and open them, take out every treasure they contain, and with a letter send them to the boy who owned them. A little drummer-boy died yesterday. I have found

his haversack ; it contained a picture of himself, taken with his mother when he enlisted. Such a rosy boy ! I thought as I looked upon him yesterday, wasted and dead, that I was glad that his mother could never know how he changed before he died. I have sent his last message and all his things to her. The eloquence of these worm-eaten, mouldy bags cannot be written. Here is a piece of stony bread, uneaten, the little paper of coffee, the smoked tin cup in which it was boiled over the hasty fire on the eve of battle ; here is the letter sealed, directed, never sent ; here is the letter half written, never ended, beginning, ‘ Dear wife, how I want to see you ! ’ ‘ Dear mother, my time is almost out ; ’ and the rusty pen just as it was laid in the half-filled sheet by the brave and loving hand which hoped so soon to finish it. Here are scraps of patriotic poetry carefully copied on sheets of paper tinted red, white, and blue ; here are photographs of favorite generals, and photographs of the loved ones at home ; here are letters full of heart-breaking love and of sobbing loyalty to duty and of holy faith and cheer written to them from home ; and here is the Testament given him by the woman that loved him best. Mother, these are all mementos of brave, loving life gone out. The boys who owned them will never go back. To one unfamiliar with the soldier’s life these relics might mean little. To me they mean all love, all suffering, all heroism. Deeds

of valor are no longer dreams gone by. We live in knightly days; our men are dauntless men. Will there ever be one to write the life of the common soldier? His blood buys all that we hold dear, — country, home, a free government, the endless privileges of a free people. I ask no higher privilege than to serve him living and to honor him in his grave.”

This was Mary Clemmer's preparation for her work as a writer on public affairs in Washington. Was it matter for wonder that during all the rest of her life she carried vivid memories of what the salvation of the Union had cost the people? A philosophical spirit she could hardly be expected to show when these memories were too keenly revived; and the Chisholm affair in Mississippi in 1877 excited her so that she felt impelled to add to the poem which she had written for the Fourth of July celebration at Woodstock, Connecticut, the following lines: —

“ What do we celebrate?
Freedom's new birth? Elate
While on the sad East's verge
The sullen war-waves surge,

And lines of battle break
In blood, 'for Christ's dear sake' ?
Our bells of Freedom ring,
Our songs of Peace we sing;
And do we dream we hear
The far, low cry of fear,
Where in the Southern land,
The masked, barbaric band,
Under the covert night,
Still fight the coward's fight,
Still strike the assassin's blow,
Smite childhood, girlhood low !
Great Justice ! canst thou see
Unmoved that such things be ?
See murderers go free
Unsought ? Bruised in her grave
The girl who fought to save
Brother and sire. She died for man.
She leads the lofty van
Of hero women. Lit her name
With ever-kindling fame.
Her youth's consummate flower
Took on the exalted dower
Of martyrdom. And Death
And Love put on her crown
Of high renown. . . .
Cease, bells of Freedom, cease !
Hush, happy songs of Peace !
If such things yet may be,
'Sweet Land of Liberty,'
In thee, in thee !

“ On hill-top and in vale
Lie low our brethren pale,
June roses on each breast.
Beloved ! ye are blest !
Ye yielded up your breath,
Ye gave yourselves to death,
For Freedom’s sake. We live
To see her wounds. We live
To bind her wounds ; to give
Life up for her high sake,
If life she need. We take
The cross that ye laid down.
The world may smile or frown.
We kiss the sacred host,
We count the priceless cost,
We swear in holy pain,
O sacrificial slain,
Ye did not die in vain ! ”

This is very effective both as poetry and politics. Fortunately the state of things which it so powerfully characterizes is not as prevalent in the Southern States as the writer feared it was in 1877. Her memories of Harper’s Ferry were again aroused in 1882, when, sitting at her window in Washington, on “ Emancipation Day ” she saw the happy colored people pass on their annual holiday : —

“But the procession! It was the finest of that race, so fond of processions, ever seen in this city. Regiment after regiment of the sons of slaves, in solid phalanx, marched on, to bugle and drum, in the full uniform of the citizen soldier. As four black men passed, holding the four corners of a superb United States flag, I seemed to see another flag trailing far off in the past, — the magnificent flag that I once saw in Virginia, tied to a horse’s tail, dragging in the mud, thus ignominiously brought into a captured town by Stonewall Jackson’s triumphant men.

“‘Here is your — United States flag!’ cried the soldier who rode the horse.

“‘Here is our blessed flag! The flag that has redeemed us and clothed us men,’ seemed to say the freemen who bore on their trophy to-day. The triumphal centre of the procession was an immense flower-decked car, drawn by four horses in which every State in the Union was represented by a black girl dressed in white, while high above them all sat a living Goddess of Liberty, a beautiful quadron, dressed in white covered with pink rosebuds. Well, it was a sight that meant ‘more than tongue could tell,’ in a city where, twenty years ago, a colored woman could not wear a veil on the street without its being stripped from her face by a policeman, nor a colored man walk the street after nine o’clock at night without being dragged to jail.”

The pathway of the independent critic and observer in Washington was not a difficult one in the years immediately following the war, when public opinion in the Northern States was kept solidly opposed to the Executive by the unfortunate course of President Johnson. On her return to the city in 1872, after the conclusion of the editorial engagement in Brooklyn, a different state of things was presented. During the campaign of that year her sympathies were strongly with the party that sustained General Grant, although she had during some of her occasional visits to the capital in 1871 written some powerful words in opposition to the course then pursued toward Mr. Sumner and Mr. Schurz by their party associates in the Senate. The re-election of President Grant was followed by the unfortunate Credit Mobilier revelation in Congress, which severed so many long-time friendships and destroyed so many reputations. Two years later there were developed some grave executive scandals, and many

abuses in all branches of the Government service were exposed to view. It was impossible for an honest writer, with any real interest in the affairs of the people, to ignore these public wrongs, or to fail to expose and decry them. She did not flinch from the plain speaking which she felt to be necessary; and the result was, she soon found herself the target for some highly abusive communications in the party newspapers and from private individuals through the mails. These criticisms and attacks she met with the following terse declaration of her independence as a writer:—

“Some of the noblest men and truest friends I have ever known are in public life. *They* do not take umbrage or accuse me of ignoble motives, however much they may differ from my printed opinions. Their self-respect and common sense assure them that I never think of them, much less mentally accuse them, when I assail the abuses of official life. What I do assail, and intend to continue to assail, however hopelessly, is official corruption and a false estimate of official state and obligation, which would build up a preposterous official caste, inimical

to the dignity of true citizenship, based on money, 'jobs,' and power, howsoever gotten, instead of the personal fitness and high character indispensable to the true servant of the State. While I speak at all, I shall never cease to denounce the one and to defend the other. Doing this, I pity the craven who out of the smallness of his own nature accuses me of bringing to the discussion of public interests personal piques and fancies."

She never flinched from what she felt was her duty to herself as a writer and to the public, although it was often a severe strain upon her nervous forces to publish what she believed about public men and political policies. Thus she felt that the project for a third re-election of General Grant to the Presidency involved grave perils to the nation, and she forcibly said in one of her letters in 1879:—

"With all the force of my will and spirit I am against the use of public office, of the trusts of the people, for the upbuilding of personal selfishness, for the gains of political cupidity. After years of close personal observation, of clear personal knowledge of the persons of whom I speak, so far as my words can reach the people, I warn them—for the sake

of their country, for the sake of all that is best and dearest in it—against the repetition of such an administration as closed March 4, 1877. It may take on the name of valor, of world-wide renown, of material prosperity, the glamour of poetry, of religion even. No matter. All the same it is a false god. I warn you against it, and warn you in season. I say to every true man, to every true woman: So far as you have power, be one to lift ‘the government of the people for the people’ out of the low region of personal greed and aggrandizement; out of the polluted air of mercenary politics, into the pure atmosphere of patriotism and the universal good.”

A whole chapter might be made up of selections from her letters expressive of her sense of the value of integrity in public life and in the service of the people. Referring in one letter to the attempt of a corrupt man to rebuild his political fortunes in Congress, she said:—

“The greatest failures ever witnessed in the House of Representatives have not been intellectual failures, but failures in the underlying force of integrity, which, after all, is the corner-stone of all true government, as well as of all real personal prosperity. The men who have gone down and back

into the outskirts of obscurity are the men whose clouded honor no lustre of talent could restore."

Again, referring to President Eliot's statement of reasons why "men of recognized intellectual ability avoid public life," she wrote:—

"Nothing could be more disastrous to the welfare of a people than the 'foregone conclusion' that its laws are to be made and executed by men morally and mentally inferior. Such men, by force of condition or circumstance, always have crept and always will creep into legislative power; but never let a true patriot acknowledge that the government of his country, in its final potentiality, is given over to such men. Let every mother teach her son, as did the mothers of the Revolution, till it becomes an inspiration in his blood, that, first and last, he is to love and serve his country, and we shall hear less about the 'superior men,' the 'fine gentlemen,' all staying at home, while only 'wire-pullers' and schemers come to Congress. Leaving out all personal 'jobs,' 'bills,' and mere extravagances, which are bound, in greater or less number, to come up before every Congress, when we consider the importance of the questions touching the interests and happiness of every citizen, the questions concerning the currency, tax reform, the rights of women, the

advancement of education, the relation of the United States to other governments, the integrity of elections, what enlightened mind can say that measures such as these do not demand in their legislators the clearest intelligence, the broadest comprehension, the most unflinching integrity, that the most clear-headed and cultivated and righteous American citizen can bring and consecrate to the public service of his country? Upon closer consideration, surely President Eliot will declare that men of the most 'recognized intellectual ability' may find in questions such as these, touching the weal of millions of human beings, 'a play for the most worthy ambitions' that can stir human impulse or impel human will."

The fact that a brilliant rascal could obtain much popular support as a candidate for an important office did not deter her from speaking the truth about him, provided she felt sure of her knowledge. It would have been well for her could she have realized that where ninety-nine readers approve the sentiments of a writer on public affairs and one disapproves them the one reader is pretty sure to declare his discontent, while it is by no means certain that any

one of the ninety-nine will manifest his approval. In 1882 she felt moved to write the following semi-personal statement, the force of which will be felt by every writer on public affairs who has ever undertaken to instruct the people concerning men who run for office : —

“ A person with absolutely no ends to serve, personal or political, with no personal hatred or malice to wreak on any public man, but who has been so placed personally as to come into possession of an intimate knowledge of public affairs and of the characters and acts of public men, writes from that knowledge and proof in behalf of truth, in behalf of the people, scathing sometimes the favorites, of whom by personal observation he knows nothing. What is the result? Unreasoning, bitter retort, in public and in private. The charity that might say you were honestly mistaken is not vouchsafed to you. Instead you are accused of the most ignoble motives, of ‘spite,’ of ‘envy,’ of ‘jealousy,’ of every incentive save that of telling the truth and being an honest person. Malice and uncharitableness turn and rend you, because you know more of public men than they do and have written from your knowledge. You have seen the uncertain clay out of which has been fashioned the demagogue idol that they

deem all gold, and for saying so you are to be suppressed.

“At rare intervals comes an amiable entreaty, like one received yesterday, saying: ‘Please don’t criticise too sharply the state of ——’s *favorite statesman*. It is a serious injunction in all our Conventions *Instructed for* ——!’ Whether amiable or malignant, these communications all have one value, the unquestionable proof they give of the utter personal ignorance of the writers of the individual character of those whom they write about. There is no more thankless task on earth than that of writing the simple truth of any political favorite. The people who know him personally know him for what he really is; the people who think they know him from political accounts always know him, very largely, for what he is not. Public men, like others, in the final aggregate pass for what they really are. But the final summing up is never reached by the ‘public opinion’ manufactured from time to time for special ends, by direct appeals to the passions, prejudices, emotions, and imaginations of uninformed people, in behalf of some man suddenly set up as the political fetich which they are commanded to worship. After that, woe to the simple truth-teller who speaks of their idol for what he intrinsically is. He rarely convinces anybody, while he maddens many and is himself beaten with many stripes.”

It will not be possible here to attempt even the shortest summary of what she wrote on public questions during the eighteen years from 1866 to 1884 that she spent partly or wholly in Washington. Much of what appeared in her letters from the capital related to the uppermost topic of the hour, whatever it might be, and was written to convey an enlightened view of a situation which might be wholly changed seven or fourteen days later, when another letter from the same interesting source would engross the reader's attention. Her letters were very largely of a personal character, giving the word a proper implication. She was capable of graphically outlining the physiognomy and bearing of the men who composed the Government, but she preferred to write of their acts and their merits as servants of the people. She would not dabble in what is known as "social gossip," and she often felt heartily sorry for the deserving workers in a field of newspaper effort, which those who are most anxious to

utilize it always affect to despise. On one occasion, when unusual difficulties were put in the way of the presence of the "society reporters" at the White House, she said of them : —

" Their reception in the Executive Mansion reminds me of Madame D'Arblay's tale of woe concerning herself and Miss Planta when they went in the suite of their Majesties to Mineham. The abject chronicler of old Queen Charlotte herself was not left more forlorn than is the faithful Jenkins of to-day, who, cast into outer darkness, attempts to depict the present 'state' of the former master and mistress of 'Hardscrabble.' "

She saw through most of the humbug and the absurdity that is incidental to public life in Washington, but she was careful also to see all that was good and genuine and admirable in it; and her letters are full of kind, tender, and indulgent comments on men whose careers often furnished materials for severe criticism. While she spoke her mind freely in regard to the various occupants of the White House during her residence in Washington, yet the kind things

she said of the personal character of the five Presidents whom she saw there were all freely and gladly said. In many cases her tributes to public men after their decease were most touching and beautiful. Such was the character of her references to Sumner, to Chase, to Wilson, to Zachariah Chandler, to Carpenter, to Samuel Hooper, to Fernando Wood, to Burnside, and to many others that might be mentioned. Whatever in their characters and careers had proved of service and of value to the country she generously recognized and praised. She kept always in view the welfare of the people who were represented, in passing judgment on the success or failure of their Representatives, and was ever ready to utter a pæan when she felt sure that it was well with the Republic. This chapter cannot be more appropriately concluded than by quoting the final paragraph of a letter which she wrote on the day after the inauguration of the new President in 1877:—

“ I stood in a north window of the Capitol as the inaugural procession moved down the hill, back toward the White House. ‘ Sweet, sweet, piercing sweet ’ was the music of the bands, as it came back on the airs of spring. What a rhythm there was in the marching feet of those many men ! Their bayonets flashed, their drums beat, their banners flew, as they moved musically on. Amid them passed an open carriage, holding three simple citizens, one of them the new President, who had come to his place through such struggle and strife. Four days ago this scene would have seemed impossible. But a little more than a week ago, assassination was threatened if this hour came. How low the clouds hung ! How deadly was the battle ! Who could dream it possible now ? To look on this sight is enough to make one believe that already things are ordered on the best and surest foundations, — that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety are even now established. For over all, more than all, the people have peace and a President. Our homes are saved, commerce is unimpeded, industry is quickened, the vocations of life go on without interruption, and the world has learned anew that a republic founded in righteousness and preserved by free government strikes far below the roots of anarchy and the storms of human passion ; and, though it can be shaken, it will not be destroyed.”

CHAPTER VII.

DEVOTION TO THE WELFARE OF WOMEN.—THE SUFFRAGE
AND OTHER QUESTIONS.

HAVING in the previous chapter placed in a clear light the strong sentiment of loyalty to her country which ever distinguished Mary Clemmer, attention should now be directed to the work she did for her own sex and the opinions she held on some of the questions affecting women as citizens, which are pressing upon the public attention. Next to the love she cherished for her country there was no sentiment so powerfully developed in her as her sense of what belongs to womanhood, what women fail to attain and what they should endeavor to attain. In the matter of the suffrage, it may be said at the outset that she did not attach so much importance to the agitation for the establishment of the right of women to

vote as do some who are no more earnestly devoted to the welfare of women than she was. She rejected with scorn the idea that a man or any number of men can have the abstract right to deny to women the power to vote at general elections; but she did not think that by going upon a platform and making speeches she could do much toward overcoming the public opinion which now sanctions such a denial. She respected the motives of those women who did think it their duty to conduct a public movement in behalf of the suffrage, and never cast the slightest obstacle in their pathway. If she criticised the proceedings at their conventions, it was only with the hope of encouraging the wise and sensible leaders and discouraging and scattering the foolish or unbalanced would-be leaders who often figured at such meetings. For such women as Miss Anthony, Mrs. Stanton, and Mrs. Blackwell she always entertained great respect, and the feeling seems to have been a reciprocal one.

She was so used to looking at all human questions from the view-point of duty rather than of right, that she could not do otherwise in matters affecting the relations of women to the community at large and to themselves. Not to ask what women had a right to do but what they ought to do, was her way of looking at the "woman question," as the subject of women's relations to the community at large is now designated. She had not a shadow of doubt that it was the duty of women to participate in the serious and important affairs of the State; and she believed that the surest and quickest way to arrive at this participation was for women to fit themselves for it. "I never favored anything," she said during her last days, "that would tend to make women coarse, opinionated, or self-sufficient. I never yet saw a woman who I thought could be benefited by undertaking the performance of any public duty. But I think that there are many public duties that might be performed by women to

the public advantage." This idea she had elaborated in a forcible passage in a political letter written as long ago as 1872, in which she said:—

“Let not the most fastidious American woman suppose, by using whatever of influence she may possess for a political cause which she believes to be right, that thereby she in the slightest degree compromises the delicacy or dignity of true womanhood. It is the duty of every American woman, especially if she be a mother, to possess an intelligent knowledge of public measures, that she may define and defend to her children the principles of action and of government which she believes to be right. The American woman has a direct and personal interest in the administration of public affairs. Deprived of the elective franchise, no less she is to every intent a citizen. She is as amenable to law; she is as subject to taxes; she is as much affected in her industries, in means of subsistence, in her personal happiness, by injustice and impolicy in government,—as is man. Practical opinion daily yields to woman what the law refuses her. A man’s prejudices may be all arrayed against the very thought of women at the polls. No less he personally respects and honors the intelligent opinion of the woman in whom he confides, be she his mother,

sister, wife, friend, or sweetheart. He is influenced by this opinion; the more thoughtful, well-considered, and intelligent it is, the more he is influenced and the more he respects it. For this reason, if for no other, is it not the duty of every American woman to cultivate her intelligence, and as far as practicable her knowledge of public men and measures, that her personal influence may be intelligently on the side of equity and the best government? There is not the slightest need to speak to any extreme woman or to any women of public prominence. They will all speak their mind in their several ways, and there is not the slightest danger of their not being heard. I appeal to the average American woman, so patriotic, so clear-headed, so warm-hearted, so worthy to be honored and beloved wherever she may be,—in school, in shop, by her own hearthside. Do not do the injustice to yourself to say, because you have no public vote or voice, that you have no influence on public opinion. Every one of you helps to make public opinion. You make one half of the nation. In perception, in patriotism, in devotion to principle, in every essential of the highest humanity, you are quite the equal of the other half. Why do you live dispossessed of some of the intrinsic rights of human nature, the equal birthright of every human creature, irrespective of race or sex? It is because you do not rise and possess yourself individually of the

highest possibility of your being. You are the equal companion, the truest friend of man ; not his toy or minion. It abides with yourself to sink to the lowest or to rise to the highest. It is in the power of American women to rise to such a splendor of womanhood that by the very glory of their femininity they will claim no right in home or state that will not be theirs. No civilized man can defraud a mental or spiritual equal of the smallest right without by so much degrading his own manhood. The day is fast approaching when no American man can see a single legal disability added to the natural burdens of woman, his counterpart and friend, without a sense of shame. American women, it is for you to hasten that day. No man will do it. By so much would you delay it could you give your allegiance to an attempted party which, while it shouts ‘reform,’ sneers in your face and ignores your presence in the body politic.”

The injustice and wrong inflicted upon women ever evoked from her a vigorous protest in her published letters. Two of these letters, entitled, “Caste in Sex,” form a chapter in the volume of her essays and sketches. In another letter, after speaking of the presence of women at the Capitol, she said :—

“ Personally it does not disturb me when woman, in her zeal, demands that which in the ultimate can never be hers. Nature is the adjudicator of her own forces. Beyond her decision there is no appeal. No legislation, no progress, no widening or uplifting freedom can annul the primal fiat that set on every individual woman the seal of her personal doom. Let us calmly confront the truth. There can be no equality in a race where half of those who run for the prize are unequally and over-heavily weighted. What, then, shall be said of the victor who would lay a straw in the path of the woman by his side, who must toil on to her goal under sore burdens, from which he is forever free?

“ The prevailing hindrance to justice to woman lies in man’s inability to judge women by the simple humanity which she shares equally with him. He sees, he thinks only of the woman what, as woman, he wishes her to be to himself. Every other consideration concerning her is lost in the overwhelming consciousness of her sex. The harm lies not in his remembering that she is a woman, but in remembering and in caring for nothing else. It is the selfishness of sex that has made all the back-lying centuries, all the statute-books of earth, all the relations between men and women black with injustice. How can one half of the human race grow and soar while it binds and holds back the other half? There is one force more potent than sex: that is, the Nature

beyond, above it. Great Nature's immutable, intrinsic laws neither concessive privilege nor opportunity can change.

“Man will go on his victorious way conquering material things, proving both his strength and weakness by his prowess and by his selfishness; and woman must go on loving and serving him, bearing and nurturing his children, growing great, as well as lovely, most in spiritual things. But here and there great women, beside great men, will stand forth lonely in the coming centuries, proving by their great distinctive gifts, by their exceptional work and lives, that the unity of human nature, as shown in the endowments granted by God to his creatures, is greater than sex, that divides and combines it.

“When the human race has gained its highest development, man will have ceased to be the small schoolmaster and condescending patron that he is to-day. Then he will have gained the capacity to reverence the humanity of his sister as he now reverences his own; then and not till then will the battle of might against right end, and the caste of sex, the most cruel, the most eradicable of all castes on earth, cease to make discord and misery between men and women.”

In still another letter she indulges in a more than usually vigorous form of expres-

sion, concerning the idiosyncrasies of certain women : —

“ I never had any patience with women who like to be considered ‘ superior to their sex.’ If you are the woman you should be, you are never ‘ superior to your sex.’ I feel a repulsion to the woman who, in writing, is always ‘ lugging in’ something about ‘ my sex.’ When men write, it rarely occurs to them to dilate upon ‘ my sex.’ Then there is a feminine writer who is always making feeble assertions and as feebly fortifying them by the reminder ‘ If I *am* only a woman.’ Only a woman ! If you are the woman you should be, you are great in capacity to know, to love, to suffer, to live ; great in your humanity ; great in all that a creature of God should be. It is not half a woman who talks about being ‘ only a woman.’ If a man is greater than you, it is because he is great in human nature, and, not ashamed of his sex, never boasts of it. He has more cause to be ashamed of it than you have of yours. Yet the seal of your servitude is that you apologize for being a woman or make a plea because you are one. How many centuries must pass before woman outlives this fatal acknowledgment, which you have caught from the arrogance of men ? No race can be strong till it is proud of itself, till it finds in itself the impulse and the power to be, without apology and without sufferance.”

In a gentler mood, and one more truly expressive of her own nature, Mary Clemmer wrote as follows: —

“There is many a gilded house in Washington that with all its lavish decoration is not half the home to its inmates that this simple room is to me. This tending of the heart inward to one home centre is the saviour of its poor human nature. Show me a woman and a man who will make a home out of any spot where they alight, and you will see two already saved from the evil in the world. In this hurrying day I pause to magnify this thought. The grandest men that I have ever known have needed or longed most deeply for a home, or they have lived their largest, most expansive life in their home. The largest-natured women who live find the fulness and sweetness of being at home, or they never find it in this life. For such as have missed it or lost it no career on earth holds an adequate compensation. Now don't say I am writing a dissertation on home to fill space. Don't, I beg of you, this time say that I mean myself. I do not mean myself. I mean the uneasy sisterhood beating about me for ‘careers.’ Some women *must* have careers. These are hard enough for those who cannot escape them. Some women are not elected to human homes. They are free intelligences. They must meet fate and compel it without help.

They are foreordained to their lot. Let them alone. Let them be free, as men are free, to work out their destiny unchallenged. What fills me with wonder is that any woman should want such a lot. The well-to-do uneasy woman in pursuit of a career — without the remotest idea what it ought to be — is an afflicting object in the human race. She does n't know what to do with herself, and certainly nobody else knows what to do with her. Surely, I shall not have the slightest influence with her when I assure her that the deepest tenet of my faith is that the best thing that can happen to any woman is to be satisfactorily loved, to be taken care of, to be made much of, and to make much of the life and the love utterly her own in her own home."

She never participated in any of the organized movements to advance the "rights" of women, because as a woman she was too timid and shy for platform work, because she was otherwise very busy, and because she thought she could best serve the interests of her sex through her pen. In all that she wrote on subjects related to woman's advancement and welfare nothing will be found that the most conservative advocate of the maintenance of the sanc-

tity of the home and the refinement of the sex could properly object to. To be sure she attacked and combated with all the power she had the views of certain religious preachers, among whom the Rev. Knox-Little of England is noteworthy, whose idea of the advancement of women is to make of them a select, inferior, and subject class. The manner in which the texts of Saint Paul are used to bolster up this idea of the inferiority of women, and even of the absolute suppression of women as intellectual and responsible members of society, was always most offensive to her; and she wished that Saint Paul might return to the earth for a little taste of modern American life, and thereby obtain some fresh and useful ideas which could not be incessantly cited by wooden-headed opponents of progress as an everlasting reason why women should remain in the background in all the business of the Church and State.

The writings of Mary Clemmer will be searched in vain in the effort to discover any-

thing that did not make for the advancement and uplifting of women, or for the refinement and embellishment of their lives. She knew—none better—that it is the duty of women to be charming, no less than to be sincere. She sought to be always charming and always sincere. She knew what grace and beauty may accompany the cultivation in woman's soul of a lofty religious faith; but she knew also that there may exist the finest spiritual development without the public profession of religious beliefs. She could see the noble justification for such a life as that of George Eliot, and be as just to her as she was to Lucretia Mott, of whom she wrote so tenderly in the volume of "Famous Women." Her letters from Washington show how eagerly she seized upon every opportunity to pay the tribute of her admiration and her praise to all gentle and womanly women with whose lives her own came in contact. The underlying purpose in all her fiction-writing was to portray moral nobleness in women. She rejoiced in

every effort made to render the lives of women more useful and happy in the world. Being invited to deliver the annual address before the Washington Training School for Nurses in 1881, she prepared an address which was read at the Commencement in that year, in which she discussed the training and duties of nurses in a practical and suggestive manner. She constantly sought to lighten the burdens that bear so heavily upon women's lives, and the sympathetic spirit of her writings drew to her a great company of devoted women in all parts of the country, and even in foreign lands. A rich supply of affection and gratitude was ever flowing in to her from these sources. This began with her earliest appearance as a writer, and continued in increasing measure until the end. In a letter to an intimate friend, written as early as June, 1862, she said: —

“ I send you two of my women love-letters, the least extravagant of many. I only intended to send you S——’s first letter, but could not find it. It

was so sad, so tender, so impassioned that it drew tears from Mr. Bowles's eyes. I never showed it but to him and one other. No one but myself ever read F——'s letter. It is the least exaggerated of the many she has written me. Of all the women I never saw who have written, only these two have won me to care for them. Not because of their utterly exaggerated ideal of me, — I am humiliated to know that I am not what they dream, — but because their sad lives entitle them to a place in my heart. I should be sadder than I am to-night if no woman loved me; if there were no women I could love."

There may have been only two in 1862, but the number was soon increased, and a volume might be filled with the tender and devoted letters which came to her from these loving hands. Her success as a writer and the power which she displayed as critic and advocate in the discussion of public questions secured for her the respect of many men who were little aware of the real nature of the shy and affectionate woman whose articles they read; but tender-hearted women rarely failed to discover her and to become warmly attached to her. To

young women struggling to make their own way in the world she was a devoted and tireless friend, and the relations she sustained to them seemed sometimes to be idyllic in the purity and devotedness of the mutual affection.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOVE OF NATURE, EXPRESSED IN PROSE AND POETRY.

“AND so, crowded with brightness, beauty and bloom, passes our Easter season.”

These were the closing words of the last letter ever written for publication by Mary Clemmer, — a letter that appeared in the “Independent” on the 24th day of April, 1884. She had been describing, as she often did in her letters, some of the aspects of the outer world, and remarking upon the abrupt change from winter’s gloom to summer’s warmth and brightness that comes at Easter time in Washington. She was already very ill and weak, but while she continued to observe them, her growing weakness only made her the more sensitive to natural sounds, colors, and atmospheric conditions. In looking over

her occasional writings any one will be instantly struck by the frequency of the passages in which, often in the language of rhapsody, she describes her delight in the beauty and the glory of Nature. She inherited from her father a remarkable fondness for the natural world, a nearness in spirit to the moods and phases of Nature not unlike that of Thoreau, which is, it must be said, extremely unusual in women. She had the power of extracting spiritual comfort and health from this source when men and women failed her. Often when the material facts and conditions of life seemed very hard to her, she turned her eyes to the blue sky, or to the ocean waves, or to flowers blossoming in her garden, and was happy in the thought of the grandeur and the beauty of the works of God, which men may ignore if they blindly will, but which by no development of perversity can they destroy. This capacity for joy in Nature began with her life and always enriched it. It was a joy she wished to share with others, like every

good thing that came into her life. There were days in every year of her life which were forever memorable to her, simply for this sensuous satisfaction that came from their perfect conditions. Not the least admirable of her poems is "A Perfect Day," beginning:—

"Go, glorious day!

Here, while you pass, I make this sign;
Earth, swinging on her silent way,
Will bear me back unto this hour divine,
And I will softly say, 'Once thou wert mine.'"

One of the most perfect of her poems, "The Mountain Pine," is a fine inspiration of Nature. Sitting under the tall tree far above the town, this is what happens to her:—

"Out from the softly woven thread
Of the brown carpet round me spread,
Come creatures clean and small;
Each happy in its bright, brief day,
Perfect in every work and way,
To me it seems to call.

"It says: 'On the eternal leaf
The measure of thy day is brief,
A fragment but as mine.

Thou beatest in thy little space,
Yet cannot more than fill thy place
Within the plan divine.

“ ‘ Why chafe within thy narrow range ?
Why sigh that life must change and change ?
Why weep o’er love’s dear cost ?
Thy failure and thy want shall still .
The purpose of thy life fulfil,
And nothing can be lost.

“ ‘ The wrong that thou hast borne may give
Thee strength to help another live ;
The tear that falls, apart,
May thrill with human tenderness
The unconscious word you breathe, to bless
Some aching human heart.’ ”

This poem was written in the Catskill Mountain region, where she spent a part of the summer of 1876. During other summers which were spent at Nantucket, Princeton, New Castle, and other places she was too much depressed by pain to give expression to her delight in Nature; but in 1882 she spent some pleasant weeks at Intervale, New Hampshire, and there she wrote another poem, “ Happy Days,” which is published in her volume, “ Poems of Life and

Nature." In a private letter written there at the end of September she described a morning ramble thus:—

"You cannot imagine the delight of the walk we had, following a mountain brook up through its woody course, thick with moss and fringed all the way with exquisite ferns. It was one of Nature's own chosen and inviolate fastnesses, yet with a narrow climbing and winding path through it, through which a true worshipper could make a way. If you could have seen the cascades that flashed and fell down these fern-and-flower-hung rocks into the deep, still wells below, you must have felt their inspiration. I will not attempt to put into words the charm I have found in the mountains this year. It is just as if I had never seen them before; for, for the first time, I behold them free from the constant pain that would not let me see them. At last I am in deep and constant *rappport* with them. Even Starr King did not over-estimate or over-describe the repose, the sufficingness of North Conway, especially at Intervale. It is a dream of beauty. I should be sad indeed if I thought I should not come here again, and with you."

In an earlier letter written in the same year from Franconia she thus expressed herself:

“The Sabbath stillness rests on everything, — stillness, not silence; for though the loud discords of the week are hushed, the air is all astir with Nature’s sounds. The cricket is crying in the grass; the crows are cawing in the woods; the dragon-fly is droning in the sunlight. The green meadows roll away to the mountains, and the mountains, purple as amethysts against the azure, look down upon the world in peace. The church-bell in Franconia is sending its morning call across the hills; but, unmindful of its call, I am here by my little east-looking window, talking with you.”

It was her habit in her published letters to give frequent expression to the pleasure which she felt in the outer world; and although she ran the risk of repetition she would not deny herself this privilege of saying how beautiful the world seemed to her. In the spring of 1879 she wrote: —

“May and October are the immortal months in verse. I wonder that fuller praise has never been sung of the enchantment of April. It is the enchantment of dawning life, of expectancy, of first youth, of immortal promise. It never touches the satiety of fulfilment. It never watches the waning

of prime or the fading of fruitage. It dies, as it dawns, in the fulness of expectancy. It is full of premonitions, of suggestions, of delicious surprises; of hope, because it is youth. There is an Alpine crispness in its breath. So also there are wafts of warmth that are full of summer. It brings to the earth Nature's first holiday. I recall the apparent, pervading youth of the world last Saturday; the new, bright colors that decked the streets; the very young, the very old, everywhere along the way and in the parks basking in the sunshine of what seemed to be a new earth and a new sky. The tender leafage of the world, just breaking into bloom, seemed to flush the whole earth with delicate green. Great banks of violets purpled the outer edges of the Capitol grounds; wide beds of tulips lifted their gorgeous caps into the lavish sunshine. The next morning, Sunday, I sat by my window and looked out upon a world set not only in Sabbath silence, but swathed in the snow of a sudden winter. The green velvet of the lawn was covered with ermine; the great, swelling rosebuds, which the day before promised such speedy glory of blossoming, were now cased an inch deep in pearl; the maple-tree beside me, whose familiar boughs, bearing the beauty of every season, came into my very room; the Virginia Creeper, looping its lovely curtains above my head, — all hung their tassels of bloom through the clinging snow. Yet it did not look cruel, as it would in a less gentle

air. To-morrow, one was so sure, it would all have vanished, leaving grass and blossom the more living for its ministry. This is April, — all youth, all surprise, all promise.”

Here is a picture which was very satisfying to her eyes at Easter time : —

“There is one glimpse on a Washington street which I always pause to catch. There could be no ill of life or heart to which this glimpse would not bring to me a moment’s alleviation. It is the little Church of St. John, showing its soft brown walls through the green vistas of Lafayette Square. It is rugged and homely and old ; yet it makes a picture that is full of peace. From a distance its spire seems to merge into the blue beyond ; its brown ivy-hung walls are toned to harmony ; its approach through the Square in summer is balmy, embowered, beautiful with every tint of leaf and bud and bloom. Nor in its way is it less satisfactory in the winter, when myriads of interlacing branches throw out their delicate tracery against the azure of the sky. I do not care to look upon a fairer sight than St. John’s in a May sunset, — its walls flashing through the shifting emerald of the Square beyond ; the sky a sea of unfathomable color, giving that sense of depth and distance that draws the soul outward through the eyes till it falters at last on the far borders of

the undefined and dim. In such an hour, at such a time, it is a perfect picture. Yet it never looked fairer than in the sunshine of last Easter morning. The sun of Easter Sabbath seldom shines upon the capital through a cloud. The dazzling blue of the heaven, the bland atmosphere, the wonderful sunshine which infiltrates its quickening warmth through it, all combine to make it the Sabbath of resurrection and hope that it is. The turmoil in yonder Capitol is still. The Goddess of Liberty, gazing steadfastly down through the shining space, sees no busy brood of men wrangling at her feet. The viol is hushed. The dance is ended. The wild strife for money, place, and power seems for a season past. The parks, the streets, the avenues are thronged with Easter worshippers, — old men and young, matrons, maidens, and little children, in gala attire and fair as the morning. There was not an empty seat at St. John's. It is a small church, not making the faintest attempt toward architectural splendor or to splendor of any sort. That is why I like it. It is utterly without pretence. Yet it is venerable in reminiscence."

In July, 1879, she was moved to say in a public letter : —

"There is an enchantment in these days which allures one from all occupation. There are many

days in which it is a delight to shut one's eyes on the elements, when one is glad to forget the biting wind or dreary rain in one's own thoughts or in the thoughts of others. But to-day is but one in a week of days in which all the elements seem to merge and blend in equipoise ; when the earth floats on in a sea of peace ; when to open one's eyes is a delight, and just to breathe and to be seems the consummation of existence. We wish Mars and Saturn would have a conjunction oftener, if their attraction for each other could reach in such delightful results this latitude. By this time Washingtonians are usually dissolving in a state of bad temper and discomfort, painful to behold and much more painful to feel. Now there is nothing in the heaven above, in the earth beneath, or in the air we breathe, but balm, beauty, harmony. Through an atmosphere which holds commingled the fragrance of the Tropics with the tonic of the oxygen of the North we gaze upon the blossoming earth. Magnolias do not bloom only for the gentle mistress of the White House, though its wide old rooms are sweet with their odors, which find their way to many another room through the kindness of her heart. But in the centre of Lafayette Square one stately tree holds up into the azure its sumptuous cups of creamy white, till the whole bosky shade is penetrated with the fine fragrance they hold. It is poured equally upon the old black man, sitting under its branches, and on the fair white child play-

ing in the path. To-day the largess of beauty seems to rest on every created thing. Somewhat of the harmony of the spheres should penetrate human nature. We should be as amiable as the angels who bask on the banks of the River of Life, — we to whom the elixir of life flows in from every vein in Nature.”

One other quotation seems worthy of a place because it is so expressive, especially in the concluding sentences, of the reverent nature of the writer, and because it describes so well the beauty of Washington in the late autumn: —

“Still the heavenly days linger. Still the banners of autumn in ever-lengthening lines of gold trail along the tree-tops that park the streets for miles and miles. Winter seems to hover afar off, as if loath to quench the glory of the still-blooming earth. In the garden roses still unfold their fragrant hearts to the pale sunshine of the waning year. Far away o’er ‘the happy autumn fields’ broods the nebulous gold of this entrancing atmosphere. It swathes all things — the solvent river, the solid hills, the parks and homes of the city. The maples back of the President’s house seem to mass against it in piles of gold, while the undulating lawns run in emerald to the river. When Congress adjourned, yesterday,

and the rushing law-makers broke loose upon the street, intent upon their long-delayed dinner, the setting sun, vast and red, stood level upon the crest of the Virginia hills, and as he went glowed full upon their faces. The whole city flushed in the glow. Spire and roof and tree-top took on the splendor of the 'one vast Iris of the West.' We stood on the western terrace of the Capitol — a woman true as truth and all alive to beauty, and I — and took in for memory the magnificence of the moment. No city on earth could have shown a fairer sight, touched with more idyllic splendors, than did much-berated Washington at that moment. And, as twilight rose supreme above the hills, out of a vast interfusing sea of amber, I glanced at the faces of the men hurrying by, to see how many of them all would look up and on to the glory before their eyes. All, perhaps, were unconsciously conscious that the air, clear and fine, was soothing to their senses; but how few of all those hundreds received with one thought the vast bounty of beauty spread out before them! Were such a sight visible but once in a thousand years, all the tribes of earth would make painful pilgrimages to congregate and gaze. But Nature is so lavish we receive her constant largess even of sunshine and air without consciousness — often without thanks. Words are all too poor to tell of the munificence of this autumn — of the long procession of balsamic days that have distilled their healing odors

for us ; of the four marvellous planets that night after night light their worlds of splendor above our homes, and simply by their presence in the dim profound lift us for the moment from the struggles of the race to the thought of the loftier paths and lonelier journeys of our sister planets. Jupiter and Venus do not blaze night after night in vain, even for the inhabitants of this kindred world. Nor did Mars and Saturn meet, salute, and part, on their vast journey, without being watched by hundreds of patient eyes outside of the Observatory. I scarcely wonder at the influence astrologers claim the planets exercise over the destinies and minds of mortals. I, whose occupation so often is to chronicle the doings of men, here make my little sign, ere I take up my task, to say that the glory of God, as it flows over me day by day from his visible worlds, is what makes the burden light and the task endurable."

CHAPTER IX.

POWER TO DELINEATE CHARACTER. — PERSONAL DESCRIPTIONS OF PUBLIC MEN.

THE sketches and portraits of distinguished persons in Washington, which formed so prominent a feature of Mary Clemmer's published letters, constituted to many of her readers their principal charm. It would be hardly proper to omit from this volume some references to this power of describing personal appearance, and at the same time delineating traits of character, which she possessed to such a remarkable degree. It was her skill in picturing together faces and characters, the outward appearance and the inner life and thought of the conspicuous men of the day, that gave her writings a special value to many who came to depend upon them for their impressions of

the directors of public affairs at the capital. There was a freedom and often a sense of humor in her touch which showed that she never stood in too much awe of her subject to tell the truth about him. She liked to praise the persons she wrote about, but she liked better to give a true impression of them. Here are three little bits of portraiture taken at random from her letters, which illustrate her method and show how she could condense into a few sentences the salient facts concerning a notable man's looks :—

“A little further on I met Zachariah Chandler, burly and tall, but not straight like Wood ; caned, but not gloved ; his head far in advance of his feet, which ‘toe’ far apart and rush on with mighty strides. He is evidently fresh from his barber. The dark locks, which time has spared, are shining, smooth, and patted down, as young men wore them years ago, before they affected shaved crowns and standing collars. His unwrinkled face is full of smiles, and altogether he wears a holiday aspect. It is rather an unusual sight to see Zachariah Chandler promenading the Avenue at two o’clock of the day ; and, seeing him, one is quite ready to believe that

he feels, as he says, as if he were let loose from school. I believe I never said so before, but am going to now, — that, on the whole, I like this man. Perhaps it is because I like his daughter a great deal better than I do him, and fancy that the father of so true a woman must have a certain quantity of good qualities of his own. I am sure he has.”

“An equally intellectual-looking man is John Sherman, Secretary of the Treasury. He is at least six feet high and rather slender. He has a most thoughtful face, with calm, far-reaching eyes; and in the absolute repose of his manner is the antipodes of his brother, the famous General of the army. Secretary Sherman has a high head, with large ears, long mouth, and a capacious nose, broad at the bridge. He has a full crop of hair and a full beard, rather closely shorn. An atmosphere of great serenity surrounds him, and in the utmost heat and stress of debate he is always master of himself and of his argument. He has the true dignity of a senator, never exhibiting bad temper, though no one could accuse him of a lack of intense earnestness. He has the judicial brow and mind, a wise, strong man, with a tender heart, which he never hangs out for the world’s inspection.”

“The appearance of John Logan on the Senate floor called forth some half-smothered but sponta-

neons cheering from the galleries. The galleries seemed to be glad to see 'John' back again. Time also has touched this man gently. His raven locks show not a single silver thread, nor his brown face a single line either of thought or care. Not that he is a thoughtless-looking person; quite the contrary. But he is one whose inward scars, if he has any, do not show outside."

Here is a picture of Speaker Randall as he appeared in 1878, which certainly does full justice to a man of marked individuality:—

"Mr. Randall's presence in the chair is extremely winning. Cast in Roman mould, tall and powerful, he sits high and looks the man he is. He is just fifty years old, but does not look forty-five. Those traces of wear and tear so palpable on the faces of many public men, telling sometimes of too little sleep, sometimes of too much drink, of eating ambition, or of nameless dissipation, are in nowise visible here. The face tells somehow another sweeter and rarer story,—of a happy home and of household loves. I doubt if any man could carry that expression who has a home and is not happy in it. Mr. Randall has a fine head, covered with closely curling black hair, clearly cut, strong features, with a square, solid, but not heavy jaw; a mouth that could hardly

fail to have its own way if it set about it. The very strong will of the man is perfectly apparent in his countenance, but, combined with the head and brow, gives the impression of large power rather than of mere wilfulness. It is said that Mr. Randall's favorite pastime is the study of astronomy; that when he wants to forget the broils of House committees, he lifts his eyes to the heavenly bodies. This must explain the cherubic expression which steals over his uplifted countenance occasionally, even amid the turmoil of the House. The most practical of men, when nothing important is going on I have seen him look as if he were star-gazing. What a rest it must be to turn from the bedlam below to the imaginary contemplation of Saturn's rings and Jupiter's ridiculous little moons!"

Worthy of preservation here also is this little picture of a personality that was so long a notable one in the House of Representatives. The paragraph was written in 1879.

"Holding a levee in his little wagon in the space before the Speaker's desk sits Alexander Hamilton Stephens, that almost disembodied spirit, that will o'-the-wisp of a patriot, who still persists in staying in the most transparent shell of a body and in bringing

it punctually to Congress. Every year the body looks a little smaller and the eyes considerably bigger. Marvellously big and bright they are, these eyes, set in such a pale, shadowy face. One does not have to look long to have it seem that the eyes are all there is of this man. His hands are attenuated, and as he slowly and feebly propels the wheels of his chair, one expects each moment to see it finally pause. But no; still it pushes on, and we are told that the little gentleman is in better health than he has been for twenty years. His face is most pathetic, from the seal of life-long suffering it bears. The brightness and kindliness of the large, dark eyes, set in its whiteness, make it not only attractive, but decidedly winning. Men of every temperament and shade of opinion come up to him; and at last, when the little wagon-chair moves slowly on to the outer door, while one hand moves it, the other is outstretched to take the many eager ones reached out to him, in most affectionate farewell."

There was no glamour in the view that she was wont to present of the great military chieftain who for eight years was the President of the Republic; but she was glad to praise him when she could, and the following sketch of him as he appeared in January, 1877, near the

close of his second term, cannot be regarded as lacking in kindness or in graphic touch : —

“ Another exceedingly well-dressed man who walks Pennsylvania Avenue is President Grant. I met him just above the Treasury, with his son ‘ Buck,’ as tall as himself and the best looking of the young Grants, and made the mental comment, ‘ The President looks like a gentleman.’ He did not always look *quite* a gentleman. In the earlier days of his administration he did dump his hands in his pocket and travel slowly along the street with a smoking cigar in his mouth. He does no such thing now. The stories that you read of the President going along the street in this fashion at present are all fictions. Neither does he any longer use his pockets as mittens. His hands are carefully gloved and he carries a substantial cane. He is thoroughly well dressed, as if his habiliments were the outward expression of an inward renovated self. I know old people who would say, comparing him with his former self, ‘ The President looks as if he had got religion.’ It seems to me that the day has gone by when any one believes that slovenliness is a sign of intellect or genius. It is usually the sign that you are dirty or lazy, and that there is something very wrong the matter with you. How many times a man puts on a better and a sweeter life with the new

coat that he has worked and paid for. Emerson knew all about it when he said: 'If a man has not firm nerves and has keen sensibility, it is a wise economy to go to a good shop and dress himself irreproachably.' So the President's good coat is a symbol and a sign. Just as the newspaper man (the woman did not say so) declared that the President was very red in the face, that he was about to have the apoplexy, that he smoked fifteen or twenty cigars a day, and was 'drinking himself to death,' the President slowly emerged from the White House, in his right mind, wearing exceeding good clothes, no cigar in his mouth, a cane in his gloved hand, his head erect, his eyes alert, and walked down Pennsylvania Avenue; and thus, erect, cigarless, and well-dressed, he has continued almost daily to walk ever since. Whatever fault may be found with individual acts of the President, no one who remembers him when he entered the Chief Executive office can fail to see in him now decided indications of mental growth. He is a larger man physically and a larger man intellectually than when he reached the supreme office. You see it in the prouder, firmer step; in the quick, alert glance; the clearer and stronger features,—as if the multifarious demands of the position had not only sharpened but increased his faculties, while the social side of it, at least, had softened and refined his sensibilities."

Against this picture of Grant may be set another and more strongly drawn portrait,—that of General Garfield at the time of his election to the Presidency in 1880:—

“ One sometimes meets a man or woman in whom there seems to be material enough, personal and mental, to make half a dozen of the average sort. This impression one gets from General Garfield. The first consciousness is of his immense vitality. Had he less brain, he might have made himself famous as a champion prize-fighter. He is said to be six feet high, but looks shorter, from the breadth and depth of his shoulders and chest. The large nutrition of the vital temperament supplies his very large brain, making a powerful enginery as the physical basis of manhood and statesmanship. His type is pure Saxon, in itself sufficient to account for the fictitious story of his German ancestry. His eyes are light blue, perceptive rather than deep, while harmony and strength combine in features and profile. He once called the attention of a friend to the fact that the most intellectual men in the departments, as a class, were very deficient in ‘ back head,’ a lack that will never be observed in himself. The depth of his head from the arch of the nose through, in its way, is quite tremendous; but the length

from the top of the ear through the perceptive faculties is the most powerful mental characteristic of his head. It has also great height from the ear to the moral organs. The reasoning faculties, not small, seem so only by comparison with the remarkable development of the rest of his head. Such a head, sustained and driven by the motif forces of a powerful vital temperament, make the man what he is, — a giant in certain directions. Intellectually he is strongest in his perceptive faculties. To see, to know, to understand, through an extended range of vision; to retain what he knows, to use what he knows, in perfect rhythm and order — his knowledge available at the swiftest call and at every opportunity; combined with his extreme cultivation, his love of sacred and classic story, his instinctive veneration for the good and great, his penetrating perception of the finer shades of character and feeling, his subtle tact in dealing with persons, his suave voice and affectionate manner — all make him personally a favorite in social life and with his political comrades.”

She always delighted to speak words of praise of the English minister Sir Edward Thornton, who so long resided in Washington, and of his family. She wrote of them on one occasion as follows : —

“ America is in debt to England for the very high type of manhood it presents it in its personal representatives. The memories of Lord Napier, of Lord Lyon, of Sir Frederic Bruce in Washington have not yet faded into traditions. Their portraits remain conspicuous in Brady’s gallery, and their personal gifts and graces linger with a freshness that amounts to tenderness in the minds of many people; while the present British minister is honored and beloved by all classes. The wise and fine example of Sir Edward and Lady Thornton will live when the people they have helped to benefit can behold their faces no more. If you ask me in what this good example consists, I answer: In the very positive amount of good sense, good health, good breeding, simplicity, and unostentatious refinement which they quietly filter through each stratum of society. Vulgarity and pretence instinctively shrink and shrivel away in the serene yet searching light of true gentlemanhood, of true ladyhood. In a crowded street-car Sir Edward Thornton does not disdain to give up his seat to a woman laden with a heavy market-basket; nor to a colored woman on her way home after a day of toil in somebody’s kitchen. His young daughters, in stout shoes and short dresses, tramped across the moors, ‘over the hills and far away,’ years before Queen Victoria’s daughter crossed the ocean, to set the example of sturdy pedestrianism to the delicate and dainty daughters of this

Western land. Lady Thornton, always dignified, as a matron should be, never indulges in 'airs' or assumptions of any sort. Her perfect breeding never bears the flaw that shows she condescends."

The old painter who spent so many years of his life in the Capitol at Washington, and who died in 1880, leaving his work there unfinished, was thus described in an "Independent" letter: —

"For nearly two years the absorbing centre of interest to visitors in the Rotunda has been the human figure, dim in high air, at work on a little scaffold, clinging to the upper wall. The descent of Brumidi in the wooden basket, at three o'clock each afternoon, was the event of the day. He was an old man, wearing a thick mane of gray hair and a patriarchal beard. The width of his head seemed to lessen its height; yet it was high, and his perceptive faculties the largest. His full, great eyes were set very wide apart, each side of a cogitative nose. His mouth, revealed by an open moustache, was firm and refined. He wore a military cloak, and to strangers bore the air of reticence, which well befits the aristocracy of genius. But his also was that impulse of quick response which belongs equally to genius when it meets its own.

He was cordial, charming, enthusiastic to all with whom he was in sympathy. He was cultivated in literature, could talk of Shakespeare, Dante, the old Italian and classic poets, and of historical art, by the hour. He had enthusiasm for many Americans. From a hundred places within the Capitol the faces of American statesmen look down upon posterity, painted by Brumidi. He had finished a portrait of Jefferson and was painting the portrait of Henry Clay at the time of his death."

There is in one of her letters written in the autumn of 1877 a tribute to one of the greatest statesmen of the war period, — perhaps the most powerful intellect in either branch of Congress while he was in the Senate, — which may well be added to the collection of portraits in this chapter: —

"Within the muffled Senate Chamber Morton's empty seat, its iron rest, its sable drapings, speak eloquently for him. That it should remain unoccupied, even for a week, seems an unusual mark of respect, as one recalls how soon even Sumner's seat was taken. I doubt if any senator who has passed away will be missed longer than Morton. This is true not more from his large pervasive quality of

presence than for his absolute devotion to his party, and the solid, solemn force with which he expressed that devotion. I may say that day by day he pounded it into the ears of his listeners and the understandings of his comrades. He used no catch-words that delight the fancy, no clap-trap of speech ; but he had a positive skill of statement. Every sentence hit the mark, and the mark was always an indisputable fact. Invincibly persuaded of what he believed, every pulse of his heart, every force of his mind was dedicated to it, till he seemed to stand forth himself the embodied fact. Words are too weak to measure his loss to his party. The waves will soon seem to close over the spot where he went down. The swift vast current of affairs will seem to rush on as if there had been no break. But it will not be so. The missing link will not be replaced. The dissolving elements in the great party in which he was so long a centripetal force must miss more and more his cohesive will as they fly farther and farther apart into the chaos of final dissolution. With Morton went the President's most powerful ally in the Republican party. To no one did it come harder than to the great war governor of Indiana to yield the final fruit of that war in the President's Southern policy ; but, having submitted to the inevitable result, in none other could the President have found so powerful a defender. The record of his past, unmarked by a single party

deflection ; his unflinching devotion to that party, at any personal cost, against any odds, no matter how stupendous, would have made him a support to the present administration such as it will now seek in vain through the length and breadth of the Republican ranks.

“Some men’s personality seems trivial beside their fame. If this were not true, Emerson would scarcely have written, ‘Most people descend to meet.’ The actual presence of those deemed ‘the great’ is usually disappointing. This could not be said of Morton. Maimed and crippled though he was, he personally seemed to fill a larger space in the Senate than any other man in it except Sumner. After Sumner’s death, in this pervasive quality of presence he had no peer. For while Roscoe Conkling has superb stature and marked appearance, he has vanities of dress and manner to which Morton was a stranger. Even when he dragged himself upon two canes, Morton had the form of a giant, the neck, head, and face of a mastiff. Mighty, yet rude force, rather than refined strength, was expressed in all his lineaments. His eyes, hair, and beard were black, his skin swarthy, his head large, round, and powerful, and, with all his suffering and all his toil, when he left Washington last spring he looked like a man who had scarcely reached middle life. Victims of hopeless disease sometimes seem just before death to gather back into their faces somewhat of the old

expression of youth, hope, and health. So it was with Morton. After entering the Senate, he never looked so young as he did last winter. Cutting off his beard, leaving his chin bare, relieved by a line of black moustaches, increased this aspect, and even gave him a look of distinction that he had not before. For years carried to his seat in a chair, he now walked in, leaning on two canes. Instead of sitting to speak, as he used, he now stood up, leaning on an iron rest; and thus through the entire winter the great master of facts and ideas delivered his forceful arguments. All the journals commented on his visibly improved condition; and many believed that length of days, as well as of honors, were yet in store for him. But in the terrible strain of the electoral struggle he visibly drooped. No human being could have felt this strain more than he. No one could have held its great issues closer to his heart. No one else gave to it so many hours of labor, at such cost of suffering and life. The hopeless weariness to which only the sleep of the beloved can bring long relief came into his eyes. He saw what seemed the victory of his party, then what seemed its defeat. Both were soon to be alike to him. That was the final strain that broke the silver cord. After the long, dauntless fight, it left him helpless beneath the fatal stroke to which his giant strength and weary soul at last succumbed."

The impeachment trial of Secretary Belknap in the Senate Chamber in 1876 was an occasion of great public interest, which brought to that Chamber a number of lawyers of much distinction, some of whom are photographed in the following extracts from one of her letters of that year:—

“ At the table opposite, the men are not cast in the ordinary moulds. Each man looks utterly unlike his fellow and only like himself. There at the further end is Jere Black, the great Pennsylvania lawyer. He has a certain benign expression that reminds you of Sumner; yet in this all likeness begins and ends. He is a venerable man,—I should say of more than seventy years; august in size, with a positive human kindness outraying from him like an atmosphere. His eyebrows are very white and very shaggy. Beneath them a pair of keen, twinkling, humorous eyes lie in ambush. He is an old man, but what he does not see would not be worth seeing. A sense of alertness, of vigilance, of quick, large consciousness is the most marked characteristic of his presence. His wig is far too young for his eyebrows. When a man as wise as Jere Black wears a red-brown wig above snow-white eyebrows, we conclude he abides in that supernal sphere

of mental action where the thought of anything so trivial as a wig never enters in ; or that his wife, by some means, has failed to do her duty in buying one of proper hue and placing it with her lovely hands upon his head. Poor martyr ! If he could but lift it ever so little, and let a whiff of air in upon his scorching scalp, what an infinite solace it would be. But no. He can have no consolation but his bandanna, his palm-leaf fan, and his silver snuff-box — neither one of which seems to be ever out of his hands. His manner is resignation itself. It says : ‘ I am very hot. I am bored to the verge of desperation. But I am a great lawyer and must bear the ills of life with equanimity. I have a client whom I do not respect, colleagues who seldom give me a chance to get a word in edgeways ; but I am a famous lawyer, nevertheless. The galleries all see me, therefore I cannot dispense with my coat nor take off my wig ; but I can endure my sufferings as a great lawyer should.’ Montgomery Blair, who sits next to Judge Black, has not flesh enough on his bones to make him uncomfortable. He is very tall, as all the Blairs are, taking the stature of their august mother ; but he is not of grand proportions, as was his brother Frank. He is rather attenuated, with a clean-shaven face, sandy-red hair, very slightly bald, a mildly freckled complexion, and a rather indefinite cast of countenance. But there never was a Blair who was indefinite ; and Montgomery is fully

endowed with the high faculties of his race. I leave their politics out (though in these they have ever been true to all the traditions of their past) when I say that as a family they are most delightful. 'We were a loving set,' said the ancient yet beautiful mother of this elderly man, a year ago, to me, as she recalled her sisters and the days of her early youth in Kentucky. And they are still 'a loving set.' This venerable pair, who have lived together nearly seventy years, treat each other with the chivalry of youthful lovers: while their children, who themselves have passed the prime of life, pay them perpetual homage. Remembering Montgomery Blair in his home, it is not easy to criticise him in any public place. The last on the row of chairs sits the leader of Belknap's counsel, the famous Matt Carpenter. He beats the hot air with his fan, and shakes his silvery mane with vast impatience; yet the planet spins on, and the prosecution nags him, and he cannot help himself. Studying him closely, he looks as if his whole life had been an orgy, so deeply is the expression of self-indulgence embedded in every feature. His hair has grown silvery white within two or three years, which softens his face all it can be softened. It is not an old face, nor a harsh one, and many call it handsome. He has the full, wide mouth and the large eyes of the orator, and in bearing he has the abandon of a brigand. He is dressed with more care than any other member

of the counsel, in faultless, subduing black, with white waistcoat and tie. But who may measure his sufferings in such clothes in such weather? ‘Bower! Leave off the s, I say!’ he exclaimed, fiercely, to the reading-clerk, yesterday, who committed the *faux pas* of saying ‘Bowers’; and with this exclamation his broadcloth sleeve was stripped up above his elbow, as if it had been sent up by a streak of lightning. His voice is silvery in its softness, and of the sweetest quality. No human being was ever dowered with such a voice who had not received from Nature many of the tenderest and most lovable qualities of humanity.”

These are a few specimens of the vivid and yet sympathetic tone of her references to notable people whom newspaper editors wished to inform their readers about. They might be multiplied to fill a volume. Only one more shall be added, — a brief selection from a letter of 1879, giving a glimpse of Lincoln and Stanton : —

“As day by day the bricks sift out of the walls of the old War Department, and its dismantled rooms become visible from the crowded street, we realize more and more what a landmark of memory is being swept forever out of sight. The immense State,

Navy, and War Departments, covering an entire block, will, when completed, be imposing from the very space it occupies, exasperating as it is in detail, with its innumerable small windows, which, like small eyes in a human face, must remain a perpetual offence. But, whatever its defects or splendors, it belongs to a new world. As I see the relic of the old life day by day fade out, I see again marching by its side, his guard behind — as I saw him one Sabbath morning — Stanton, with his implacable, melancholy face; and Lincoln, as I saw him one evening under the stars, — under the umbrage of the immemorial elms that line the boulevard leading from the White House to the War Department. Every evening Lincoln took that walk alone, going over to the War Department to ease his own anxiety concerning the progress of affairs in those fateful days of war. Both are pictures of the past, — these two men as they come back to me, vividly as when I saw them a part of life and of the continuity of things. I doubt if I can ever look upon the new War Department without beholding them.”

CHAPTER X.

CONCERNING HER POETRY. — HOW IT WAS REGARDED BY
HERSELF AND BY OTHERS.

SO much has been said in previous chapters of Mary Clemmer's poetry, that it may not be thought necessary to make that part of her literary work the topic of a separate chapter of this volume. There are, however, some considerations which in justice to her should not be left out of view in estimating the quality and merit of her poetical work. Although much of her poetry seemed to be a rhythmical record of emotional states, and although it was evolved at times, as has been remarked, with great rapidity and almost without apparent conscious effort, yet it must be said that she was in no wise lacking in a due appreciation of the methods and

conditions of meritorious and successful composition. She realized keenly what severe and arduous toil even the most skilful and accomplished worshipper of the Muse may find necessary in the performance of his task. When her volume of poems was about to be published, feeling that she ought to include in it some stronger and better work than she had already done, she wrote a number of sonnets, attempting therein to demonstrate her power to utilize the most arbitrary and confining of poetical forms. But she was always careful not to overestimate her own gifts; and, indeed, in speaking of her poetry she often underestimated them. She wrote to a friend in 1883:—

“I am more than glad that your heart could respond to any line of mine. Perhaps I have already said to you that I feel toward my verses as a mother must feel toward some child of hers not lovely nor of specially good report among men. She knows what it might have been under kindlier conditions; therefore its very unshapeliness may make it dearer to

her, and there is a pathos in the very tenderness she feels for this outcome from her heart of hearts."

To another friend she wrote as follows:—

"May I ask you to accept a copy of my 'Poems of Life and Nature,' issued by Osgood last winter and passed already to a second edition? They ask indulgence, if only for the wide range of time they cover. Many of them were written in extreme youth, others as late as last winter one year ago. I claim nothing for them but spontaneity and sincerity. They are true to truth as I knew it."

The references to her poetry in the following letter from Franconia in September, 1882, shed light on her own estimate of what she had done and felt she could do as a poet:—

"This perfect day fills me with unavailing wishes for your presence. It would be *such* a day in Lover's Lane in the woods above the house. It is just crispy cool enough to walk in, to talk in, or to sit down in. Yesterday afternoon I took a book and pencil, sauntered up the hill, and sat down in the wood. It was the first afternoon since I came here that I could avail myself of this charming privilege. But with my completed manuscripts on my table, I sallied forth with a lightened heart and happy mind,

and sitting down, I added at once some seven or eight verses to a poem I began last autumn in Boston, 'Happy Days,' which I shall send you after the rest to complete the section in the book called 'Nature.' I am glad you feel an interest in this book which is so deeply a part of me. Every line in it, almost, recalls some shade of emotion or experience which made intrinsically a part of my life. Life has given me no leisure, in the stress of work and responsibility which it has laid upon me to cultivate Poetry as an art. But if I live, this book is but a prelude to another of a much higher order to come after it. To this, one year in Europe will be of inexpressible value. I need it beyond expression for new pictures and added cultivation. Within the last three months, with returning health, I have been conscious of a vast increase of mental force and power of expression. I want nothing now but new experience to reach a mark I never reached before."

Her public and private letters contain many passages which show how high were her poetic ideals. To "reach a mark I never reached before" was her one constant aim. She was keenly sensitive to the intrinsic worth and quality of the work of other poets. She sometimes

felt like uttering a lament over the lack of a nobler and truer tone in much of the poetry of the period. Writing in April, 1882, of the death of Longfellow, and of the tendency of so many of the younger American poets of both sexes toward merely mechanical and unsympathetic poetical methods, she said: —

“ Nor is this scarcely less true of the men whose names are constantly given in reviews as the successors of our elder poets. Literature has become to them more or less a trade, and the mark of the market is visibly set upon nearly all that they do. Men who in rare moments of inspiration gave the world in the past occasional poems whose fineness of thought and fitness of form seemed to hold the quality of immortality, are now consumed by editing, by novel-writing, by the drudgery of the literary or the pecuniary hack. There is only so much of the very strongest or finest of us all, and the life-force or the thought-force consumed in the tug of earning one's daily bread often leaves little or nothing for the aspiration, stifled at its first breath, or for the inspiration whose finest springs were drained at their very source. If the true end of poetry is to awaken men to the divine side of things, to bear witness to the beauty that clothes the outer world, the nobility that

lies often obscured in human souls, to call forth sympathy for neglected truths, for noble but oppressed persons, for downtrodden causes, and to make men feel that through all outward beauty and all pure inward affection God Himself is addressing them, where in this uttermost consecration which baptized Milton, touched Wordsworth, which veins Emerson, Longfellow, and Whittier, and at rarer intervals Lowell and Holmes, — where in the succeeding generation is our great poet? And yet there is not a man or woman in the land who can lay claim to be in any acknowledged sense a poet, who has not in some rare hour of exaltation produced a poem which holds in itself and in the recognition of the people the highest and finest qualities of poetry. One such poem proves the normal capacity of the nature which produces it. That so little of such rare fruit appears in the great yearly harvest of rhyme is the fault chiefly of the soil and atmosphere which nourish it. Figs do not grow on thistles; nor is exalting poetry ever begotten of vanity, or vainglory, or of money-need or greed, or of a deliberate purpose on the part of any one to be a very fine poet. Thus the integral lack of American poetry is not a lack in mere color or form, certainly not a lack of self-consciousness nor of self-assertion. It is the lack of the highest spirit which can inspire and exalt poetry,

“The central peace subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation;”

the consecration of the whole creative mind to the Best in the human and the divine life. Our poetry has art, but it has not devotion. It may be 'æsthetic,' but it is not spiritual. It may be 'finished,' but it is not spontaneous. In fine and poor degree it does not lack fit poetic form; it lacks the profound emotion, the spiritual belief and impulse, the moral force and exaltation behind it, without which the greatest poetry is not possible."

While their tone, and often the whole thought interwoven into her verses, was a reflection of her own emotions and experiences, yet many of her poems possessed no such significance, and some which were supposed most strikingly to depict incidents or facts in her own life were of a wholly different character. Mary Clemmer was never a mother, and it was long a source of intense amusement to her that certain rural correspondents who had read the verses called "When Baby Comes," declined to accept this fact as the truth, and insisted that she must have had a child of her own, even although she might have, as one wrote, "hid it away some-

where.” Other poems which were of a purely sympathetic character were similarly misinterpreted; and it was on this topic that the friendly hand, to whom acknowledgment has previously been made, wrote in the Boston “*Traveller*:”

“The poet has as his material two kinds of experience, — one which he has lived in outward detail, and the other, quite as real, which he has lived intuitively, or through sympathy with others. It is the latter which is far more apt to serve as the atmosphere for the glory and the freshness of his dream, the materials from which he draws his visions. Yet whatever he writes straightway the critics assert is ‘written from his own experience.’ A curious little instance of this kind is noted in the various interpretations of a certain volume of poems just given to the world. In them is one entitled ‘One Death,’ in which ‘the dead love’ is alluded to; on which a discriminating critic rises to explain that ‘the author wrote this poem out of an anguish worse than death.’ Which tragical statement the author read with mingled indignation and amusement. The real truth was, it was written when she — for the author is a lady in this case — was a young girl, and written from sympathy with another young lady friend who was alienated from her lover; and when writing the poem she

was personally unacquainted with 'dead' love, or living love, or any other kind. The modern critic reminds one of Cuvier, who from a bit of bone or hair could predicate the entire animal; likewise the critic, from a fragment of an allusion, can construct a life of romance or tragedy, and put it on exhibition before the public."

Among the multitude of notices of her volume of poems there were many that were calculated to encourage and stimulate her; only now and then a flippant or careless word was written by some unsympathetic critic. Perhaps there is no newspaper in the United States that maintains a higher standard of literary criticism than the New York "Sun;" and what has been written here of Mary Clemmer's poetry may be pleasantly and properly supplemented by what was written by the accomplished critic of the "Sun:" —

"In 'Poems of Life and Nature,' by Mary Clemmer, we have a record of so much of the thought and feeling of a woman's life as spontaneously or easily found utterance in verse. The author of this volume has thought deeply and felt keenly, and the

result is, that her verse is soulful as well as tuneful, is fraught with a more powerful and lasting attraction than the pretty melodies with which some singers of her sex prove to us how cleverly they grasp the trick of metrical expression. There is here no noticeable lack of technical skill in the management of rhythm and rhyme, — though it might be possible to point out some unimportant shortcomings, — but it is the idea or the sentiment of the verse to which our attention is specially invited; that is to say, the writer seems to have drawn her inspiration and her conception of a poet's office from Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Tennyson; and she is so free from any trace of familiarity with the school which makes mere melody and sensuous emotion the sole aims of the poet's art, that one might almost venture to aver she has never read a line of Swinburne, Morris, or Rossetti. Yet some of her lines have a haunting music of their own, though here, as elsewhere, it is plain that the author is possessed with the thought or the feeling to be conveyed, rather than with much anxiety about the vehicle of transmission. Take as an illustration of the pleasing and sufficiently melodious form in which her reveries sometimes clothe themselves, some stanzas from a poem entitled 'The Days': —

'The days, the days, the swift, mute days
That fly across our fitful ways,
That bear us through the tangled maze
We call our life — the days! the days!

-
- 'I sigh not for the heavenly ways
That wait above our checkered days ;
I love these days that fly so fast,
These mortal days that cannot last.
- 'T is made of days, our meagre span,
In links that bind for bliss or ban ;
They fold us in their shadows dun,
They bear the splendors of the sun.
-
- 'Heart, gather in thine aftermath ;
What far, faint fragrances it hath !
What calm broods down the storm-swept way !
What beauty veins the fair, meek day !
- 'What music murmurs fine and clear,
What peace pervades its atmosphere ;
What love, what dear companionships,
Pour from the eyes, the voice, the lips !
- 'What courage, what high patience sweet,
What rest, what tenderness complete,
What trust in God, what faith in man,
In woman, meet in one day's span !
-
- 'Thou day of days ! Thy pulses run
Into my life, and we are one ;
Far on in deep content I'll say,
" My life began that day, *that day*."

" Among the sonnets, of which there are a score in this collection, two seem to us worthy of particular commendation, both as regards the substantial worth of the thought developed, and the skill of the evolu-

tion in conformity with the laws of a difficult species of composition. One of them is called 'Inadequacy,' and the other, 'The Joy of Work.'

'I saw a fallen swallow on the street
Beat on the cruel stone its wounded wing,
And lift its voiceful throat as if to sing.
It sought to soar, as if on pinion fleet ;
It stirred with inchoate song, so sweet, so sweet,
That died unsung. The poor, low murmuring,
Wrung of its pain, how pitiful a thing,
While mocked the Heaven it could not rise to meet !
Ah ! thus we greet the challenge of the sky ;
The far fulfilment we can never gain,
For wounding circumstance and wilting pain
Hold back the soaring soul that fain would fly.
We seek to sing the high immortal strain ;
But close to earth flutters our futile cry.'

'The promise of delicious youth may fail ;
The fair fulfilment of our summer time
May wane and wither at its hour of prime ;
The gorgeous glow of Hope may swiftly pale ;
E'en Love may leave us spite our piteous wail ;
The heart, defeated, desolate, may climb
To lonely Reason on her height sublime ;
But one sure fort no foe can e'er assail.
'Tis thine, O Work — the joy supreme of thought,
Where feeling, purpose, and long patience meet ;
Where in deep silence the ideal wrought
Bourgeons from blossoming to fruit complete.
O crowning bliss ! O treasure never bought !
All else may perish, thou remainest sweet.'

“It seems to us that the author is at her best in a poem entitled, ‘The Journalist.’ She appreciates with rare insight the burdens and sacrifices, the satisfactions and compensations of an exacting vocation, and her conception is expressed with unusual vigor and felicity. Our readers will be glad to see some extracts from the lines, which almost for the first time render adequate justice and due honor to the nameless hirelings of the press.

“Man of the eager eyes and teeming brain,
Small is the honor that men dole to thee ;
They snatch the fruitage of thy years of pain —
Devour, yet scorn the tree.

“What though the treasure of thy nervous force,
Thy rich vitality of mind and heart,
Goes swiftly down before thy Moloch’s course —
Men cry, ‘It is not art !’

.

“‘Only a newspaper !’ Quick read, quick lost,
Who sums the treasure that it carries hence ?
Torn, trampled under feet, who counts thy cost,
Star-eyed Intelligence ?

“And ye, the nameless, best-beloved host !
My heart recalls more than one vanished face,
Struck from the rank of toilers — early lost,
And leaving not a trace.

“Martyrs of news, young martyrs of the press —
Princes of giving from largess of brain !
One leaf of laurel, steeped in tenderness,
Take ye, O early slain.

“ Though in the Pantheon no niche obscure
Your waning names can hold forever fast,
The seeds of Truth ye blew afar are sure
To spring and live at last.

“ On lonely wastes, within the swarming marts,
In silent dream, in speaking deeds of men —
Quick with momentum from your deathless hearts,
Your thoughts will live again.

.

“ To serve thy generation, this thy fate :
‘ Written in water,’ swiftly fades thy name :
But he who loves his kind does, first and late,
A work too great for fame.”

CHAPTER XI.

THE VISIT IN EUROPE. — HER LAST ILLNESS. — DEATH.

ON the 19th of June, 1883, in St. John's Church in Washington, Mary Clemmer and the writer of these words were married; and thus it became possible for one who had tried to sustain her courage and her faith in the possibility of realizing in her own life larger blessings and rewards than had come to her, to minister for a little time more efficiently to the gentle and beautiful spirit, so soon to be withdrawn from the world. A visit to Europe immediately followed the marriage, beginning with a voyage on the "Scythia," which sailed from New York on the 20th of June, and ending with the return on the "Pavonia," which arrived at New York on the 16th day of

October. The journeying in England, Scotland, and on the Continent proved a perpetual delight, but her strength was utterly inadequate to the requirements of her eager and interested mind. The result was, that in spite of every caution the physical exhaustion from which she suffered greatly previous to her departure from America constantly increased. She did not fail to enjoy any historic place that she visited ; but, feeling such weakness, the necessity for "moving on" was a grievous thing to her. After making the northern tour, she was able to settle down for a month in London, but not, of course, to rest. There were friends who must be seen and there were the places of universal interest that must be visited. She found herself barely able to stand as she made her way through the haunts of the literary celebrities in Fleet Street, or gazed upon the beautiful pictures that adorn the palace at Hampton Court. While in London she was especially indebted to Mr. Lowell, to Mr. Justin McCarthy, to Mrs. John Cashel

Hoey, and to Mrs. Conway for kind attentions; and her stay was rendered as agreeable as it possibly could be to one in her enfeebled condition.

From London the journey lay by way of Brussels and the Rhine to the German watering-places and to Switzerland. There was a brief *détour* from Cologne to Crefeld, where American interests are so well guarded and American citizens so hospitably entertained by our able consular representative, Mr. Potter. After a short stay at Wiesbaden and Homburg, came the great wonder and delight of Heidelberg. Here there occurred an incident the full significance of which could not at the time be understood. Arriving late in the afternoon, it was dark when quarters had been procured at the Castle hotel, and when dinner was over the matchless ruin rose before us magical and mysterious in the soft August moonlight. Surely imagination can create no picture more marvellous than Heidelberg Castle, approached and beheld for the first

time on a moonlit night in summer. To climb and feel one's way along the deeply shadowed paths that lead across the embankments to the outer walls and towers of the castle is a task of no small difficulty. Suddenly the shattered towers and lofty walls loom directly before you in the undimmed radiance of the full moon. It is an experience into which a sense of the supernatural easily finds its way. In the absolute silence and loneliness of that beautiful August night there suddenly fell on the two who stood there beneath the walls of Heidelberg a consciousness of the nearness of death. It was the 20th of August, and just one year afterward the form of Mary Clemmer was laid in its last resting-place in the churchyard at Rock Creek.

A week of beautiful sunshine at Baden-Baden served to dissipate a little the solemn prevision that came to Mary Clemmer at Heidelberg. Then followed a delightful experience in Switzerland, and an excursion from Lucerne to

Como that was a perfect joy. A Sabbath in September on Lake Como! The world can furnish nothing more entrancing. The dense clouds hung low on all the mountain-tops, forming a vast sounding-board underneath which the soft clangor of the bells in the myriad of campaniles resounded like the notes of a great cathedral organ. All the morning we listened to this music, and gazed on the beautiful scenery of those wonderful shores. Then we sat for an hour on the piazzas of Bellagio, and ate the fresh figs that almost fell in our laps as we waited for the little boat that was to take us to Lecco, whence the railroad leads to Milan. In the evening we walked in the great cathedral, and that day was commemorated by Mary Clemmer in the sonnet that follows:—

A CATHEDRAL WINDOW.

A window high in an emblazoned wall
Gleams like a jewel 'neath a sculptured fane
Upon the image of our Saviour slain;
While close the crowding people humbly fall,
And gazing on him, on his dear name call,

A woman, scarred with grief, with eyes astrain,
Looks to her lifted Lord. The glowing pane
Pours glory on her in a golden thrall.
Now while I wander o'er the earth's green space,
Those weary eyes imploring plain I see;
Unto the lovely Saviour's sacred face
The woman's face of pain turns piteously;
But lo! on both the glorious window's grace
Opes wide the Heaven waiting her and me.

MILAN, ITALY, September, 1883.

Another week was spent at Interlaken, varied by excursions to the bases of the nearer glaciers, and to St. Beatenberg, where Lady Thornton and her accomplished daughters were recuperating from the effects of the trying climate of St. Petersburg. Fortunate is the traveller who makes his home in the charming hotel above the town which bears the name of Jungfraublick. In her last days, when she could only lisp the thoughts that came to her, and memory seemed to fail, she still whispered, "Jungfraublick," when asked what place in all her European experience had been most delightful to her. On the way from Interlaken

to Geneva occurred one of the most delightful incidents of her European tour. She was enabled to spend a quiet afternoon at Coppet, on the banks of Lake Lemman, the château of Madame de Staël, whose life and character had always been to her a fascinating study. She wrote an account of this visit on her return, which is preserved in the new edition of "Outlines." Almost equally interesting was the afternoon spent at Voltaire's old home, Ferney, which is so pleasantly reached by carriage from Geneva. After an agreeable stay in Geneva, and a fortnight in Paris, came the farewell to London and the week in the Isle of Man already alluded to. The restful and placid voyage from Liverpool to New York seemed to restore her energies a little; and on her arrival at her home she was so far from being an invalid in appearance, that every one congratulated her on her apparently improved health. In this illusion she herself was a sharer; but a few weeks served wholly to change her looks and her feelings.

At the beginning of December came a period of severe prostration, and this was speedily followed by the commencement of the paralysis of limbs and brain that increased until the end, eight months afterward.

The illness in December caused a postponement of a pleasure which she had promised herself immediately after her return from Europe, — a visit to Boston, where for a number of years she had enjoyed some most agreeable friendships. As soon as she mended a little she insisted on making the effort, although she was in reality quite unfit for the journey. Perhaps a consciousness that she would look upon the faces of her friends there for the last time impelled her to go. Probably the results were not harmful to her, and the weeks she spent at her favorite resting-place, the Hotel Vendome, brought her much that was pleasant. It had been her habit for a number of years to spend a part of every autumn in Boston, and she had formed a circle of acquaintances and friends there which

she loved to re-enter. To some of these friends she was strongly attached. Boston became to her a sort of haven of intellectual sympathy and spiritual rest. She found there in sufficiency, more easily than elsewhere, the associations that were most agreeable to her; and every visit that she made increased the number of personal friendships that possessed the basis of permanency. While spending her last weeks there she still cherished the hope of finishing the novel which had been promised to her publishers for two years; but she was too ill to complete any arrangements in relation to it.

In January, 1884, she seemed to recover her strength somewhat, but a great change had taken place in her sensations. She complained that although she knew she was in the world, yet she constantly felt as if she were in another. Nothing that she saw seemed real to her any more. She dreamed, so she said one morning, that she had been placed in a small wooden house surrounded by a forest; that she was

there to watch, and that there were dead people all about her. What this dream might portend she did not then seem to understand. To several friends she spoke and wrote of her peculiar mental condition, and of the great change that had taken place in her feelings. In a letter written in March she said : —

“ I feel that during the past year I have lived the life of silence, the life that holds us close to spiritual things, more than ever before. . . . Nothing has moved me from the supreme vision of that which is spiritual and eternal. . . . Suddenly one morning I felt myself separated from the world. I seemed to be only an outside spectator of all I had ever seen or cared for before, as if I were done with earth and its life.”

Yet while these confusing mental impressions were crowding upon her, she showed no trace of mental alienation, nor did she relax her efforts to continue to write. It was sheer determination to maintain her hold upon mundane things that led her still to seek her desk. Even as late as April, 1884, she completed a political

letter to the "Independent," which shows no trace of mental weakness. It was the last letter she ever wrote for publication. Soon afterward her left arm became completely paralyzed; in a few days her left side was similarly affected, and she could no longer walk. There came a day when she could not write; but this was not until June, for having casually become aware at the end of May of the death of a friend (the fact had been kept from her for some weeks for fear of its effect on her mind), she called for her writing materials, and in a feeble hand wrote the following to Miss Haidee Williamson the daughter of the one who had been taken away:—

134 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE,
WASHINGTON, D. C., May 30, 1884.

DEAR HAIDEE,— Although unable to walk without assistance, I was just starting to call on you and your dear mother, when a notice of her death was placed in my hand. It is a shock that fills me with grief. To me she was so lovely, I wanted to think of her always as one whom I could seek and see.

During the entire winter I have been confined to my room by partial paralysis; but I had already begun to count the days when I could go out again, see her lovely face and hear her gentle voice, when word comes to me that it is hushed forever, and her lovely face hidden forever from sight. I mourn with you who mourn, and especially with your dear father, who has lost the mother of his children, the delight of his eyes, and the joy of his heart. Nothing but my helplessness keeps me from coming to you to tell you how deeply I sympathize with you all. I am unable to walk or to stand. As soon as I can do either, I shall come to you. Till then accept my loving sympathy and my affectionate remembrance. When you are moved to send me a word from your heart, do not fail to do it, sure of its sacred keeping in my heart. And if it will give you and your father pleasure, I will write as soon as able a loving and faithful obituary of her for the New York "*Independent*." Pardon weakness and defects, and believe me your loving and faithful friend.

These were her last written words. When she next essayed to use her pen, the feeble little hand could only trace unmeaning lines upon the paper. The veil was gradually falling, and

each day the fair world about her was seen more dimly, and her impressions of space and time grew more faint. Each day until almost the very last found her dressed and sitting at her pleasant window; but the once familiar scenes grew to be like old memories as she looked out upon them. During the last weeks she seemed a gentle, affectionate, grateful child. She cried with joy when flowers came to her chamber from her friends, and was daily solaced by the sweet-voiced nurse who read to her the Psalms from her prayer-book. Sweet messages of kindness and of friendship fell from her lips; and when the light of her soul flickered to its going out, it was most beautiful.

On the 18th day of August, 1884, in the evening, a few minutes before nine o'clock, Mary Clemmer breathed for the last time. The unconsciousness that had shielded her from pain during the greater part of the last four days of utter prostration and paralysis had been

lifted as a veil just twelve hours earlier. Then with a tremulous voice she had asked the time, asked for water to drink, said that it was good, and the "Thank-you" then spoken was her last word on earth. One who knew her might have predicted that the grateful and serene spirit would pass thus gently and peacefully from the world. More gentle and peaceful no translation from mortal life to the new life beyond could be. She had wished intensely for continued existence here; but when at last the great change came, it was without terror or added pain. Sinking thus softly into the slumber which knew no waking, it did not seem for her more the ending of pain and suffering than the beginning of everlasting rest. It hardly seemed like death at all.

A day or two afterward, when her desk was opened, there fluttered out a bit of paper on which were written some verses which may perhaps be regarded as belonging to the present chapter of this volume:—

COMING BACK.

'T is whispered oft, the low mysterious story,
How sometime, somehow, down the shining track,
Longing for what they 've left, they leave their glory,
And to the earth and home the dead come back.

How bitter, lonely, ever is the meeting,
O room familiar! Loved ones on each chair,
Where is your old-time tender tremulous greeting,
Once all her own? Alone she walketh there.

Think how she loved you! Even Heaven's splendor
Could not enfold her willingly full fain;
Something within her still all human, tender,
Made her remember, long for her lost home of pain.

O awful stillness of the starry spaces!
As uncompanied, shorn of cheer or mirth,
Downward she drifted, drifted, found the lost loved places,
And earth's beloved — she no more of earth.

Loving, and all how near she came unto ye.
You saw her not, you never dreamed her near;
She waved her airy hand, she whispered to ye —
She was a spirit! and her words you could not hear.

When these lines were written it is impossible to say. They must have been penned months before death came, and they indicate

that then, if not so fully afterward, she was conscious of the significance of the change that was coming over her. It cannot be doubted that often during the last eight months of her life she felt to a very remarkable degree the sensations that may be supposed to come to the soul that has been liberated from its human dwelling-place.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FUNERAL.—ROCK CREEK CHURCHYARD.—SOME PERSONAL TRIBUTES.

THE 20th of August, 1884, was bright with sunshine, yet not sultry,—a perfect late summer day in the city of Washington. It was such a day as brought Mary Clemmer into very close sympathy with Nature when she lived, and on such a day she would have wished her body to be borne to its resting-place in the spot she had herself selected in the ancient churchyard of Rock Creek Parish. Years before she had written : —

“ I lie amid the golden-rod.
I love to see it lean and nod ;
I love to feel the grassy sod
Whose kindly breast will hold me last,
Whose patient arms will fold me fast,—
Fold me from sunshine and from song,
Fold me from sorrow and from wrong.
Through gleaming gates of golden-rod
I ’ll pass into the rest of God.”

The last lines were literally verified, for the dusty roadways that led to the churchyard were lined with the yellow wild-flower to which she was so much attached. The funeral ceremony at the house on Capitol Hill was very simple. Those who had loved her gathered about the peaceful face of the dead, while Dr. Leonard, the rector of St. John's, read the burial-service and pronounced some simple and fitting words upon her life and character. Her sonnet "Renunciation" was read, and at the grave it seemed appropriate that these verses, written many years before, should be spoken ere the earth closed upon her: —

REST.

Weep not when I am dead, dear friend;
Sweetheart, grieve not when I lie low;
While o'er my clay your soft eyes bend,
Remember it was good to go.
When low you press the violet sod
Whose purple tears enstar my breast,
Beloved, think I sleep in God,
Remember such alone are blest.

The perfect silence will be dear,
How dear the chance of painless rest ;
And on, beyond all pain or fear,
The perfect waking will be best.
How dim this distant day may seem,
How far the grief we suffer here !
This life the mirage of a dream,
Merged to a morning calm and clear.

It was a poet's funeral. She was buried on the gently sloping hillside, near the venerable church originally erected almost two centuries ago, whose walls still show the bricks that were brought over from England by the first builders. Old elms overhang the little edifice, and the ivy covers it on every side. Naturally a most beautiful place, this churchyard is fast becoming through artificial adornment the "Mt. Auburn" of Washington. It is one of the oldest of American burial-places, and by the terms of the grant which established it, parish, church, and churchyard are to endure forever. To-day there are two other ivy-covered graves beside that of Mary Clemmer. Her mother survived her only a few months, and in March, 1885, was

laid at rest where husband and father had been buried in December, 1881.

The announcement of her death, which was utterly unexpected save by a few, was the occasion of notices of her character and work in all the leading daily and weekly newspapers of the United States and in some foreign journals. It also prompted most generous and touching communications in private from those who knew and esteemed her to those who were nearest to her. Of the published notices, all very kind, none seemed so adequate and so finely sympathetic as that written by a noble woman who never saw her, — the article contributed to the “Independent” by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, and here reproduced in full. It was appropriately entitled “The Empty Column.” Miss Phelps wrote: —

“Who has not felt, in silent churchyards, on sunny afternoons, or in purple twilights, the impulse to lay a flower on strange graves? As subtile and

as strong is my wish to speak a word sacred to the memory of a woman whom I never knew and never saw. Where else but in the columns of the 'Independent' should one hasten to do honor to the name of Mary Clemmer?

"For many years your reader, and so hers, I have absorbed her powerful work with that half-unconscious indebtedness which belongs to the public as distinct from the private attention, and is so sure to be impartial and impersonal that it has a certain value, to one's own mind at least.

"Your great contributor is dead. By the vacancy she leaves upon your pages we begin to understand what we have lost. By the gap she has left in American journalism, the great army of hard-working and hard-bested 'newspaper people,' and that imperious, docile, shrewd, simple thing we call their public, must estimate the power of this fallen leader.

"I say 'must estimate.' Who *can* exactly estimate an influence at once so strong and so sweet, and yet so usual? Like the sun, we were sure of her, and perhaps sometimes accepted her with as little gratitude. The fine mathematics of force has not yet come to measure the relativity of womanhood to facts less fine than itself; and I doubt if most of us have realized to what an extent this woman has represented for us Womanhood in Politics. Are we ashamed of this type? Are we afraid of the record?

“Doubtless Mary Clemmer made her mistakes, like the rest of us. We may not always have agreed with her. She may not have been always right. But, surely, she was always *after* the right. She may have been liable to an over-intense judgment now and then, like all ardent natures; but she judged under the pressure of ideals which never lowered those of her readers, which never lowered her calling, which never lowered her work. She aimed to purify, rather than to please. She never manœuvred. She did not dodge; she did not coquet. No one who read her letters from Washington, week by week and year by year, could have helped feeling that this woman meant to do the womanly thing by the public weal; not the timid thing, not the time-serving thing, not the slippery thing, but the straightforward, brave, uplifting thing.

“Her fearlessness used, sometimes, to astonish us. Probably there were few men in Washington who would not have dreaded her scorching pen, had they drawn, or deserved to draw, its fire upon themselves. There were fewer who did not appreciate her appreciation. A candidate for the Presidency this year has lost in her one of the most powerful opponents whom he had to fear. Her praise was as generous as her blame was scathing. Whatever she did she dared. She revered the sacred responsibilities of her vocation with a feminine conscientiousness. She was afraid of nothing but of not doing

the best and highest. She may be said to have feared Truth and kept its commandments.

“Foremost among the ranks of her profession she dropped; and women who have written songs and tales and wrought pictures and statues, and found it less easy to work their way to the front in the battling and bustling sustained labor involved in moulding public opinion through the press, think gratefully, to-day, of her as one who did them honor in a hard calling in a womanly way; for, when we say a womanly way, we mean, above all else, a courageous way and a high-minded way.

“This is no place for intrusion upon that sacred, sheltered sorrow which mourns apart, to-day, for her; but it may at least be ours to remember, with the rights of affectionate sympathy which the readers of many years may claim, that she went to the rest of death from the rest of life, and that so it was well with her. Happiness found her late; but it found her at last.

“It is a memorable fact that, with many women to whom time has brought fame and its inevitable toil and probable solitude, the greatest good of life has come almost at the last hour. Love has snatched them up from loneliness, and held them back from the arms of death, only long enough to bestow the divine right of joy upon the departing soul. Madame de Staël, Margaret Fuller, Charlotte Brontë — we might, perhaps, add George Eliot — were of

this number. The story was not left half told. The song was sung; the drama was completed. The fuller human nature, and the richer human love-capacity, which go with the creative creature, had their late but ripe development.

“Thousands of women who never saw her face have been glad that this woman whom we miss was happy before she died. In Michael Angelo’s great picture, ‘Death,’ a dim, colossal figure knocks at the closed door against which Love, a frail child, has planted himself despairingly. Out-thrust are the tiny arms, to push the giant back. The puzzled face of the helpless thing lifts itself to the frown which he only — not ourselves — may watch. Nothing can be so inexorable as this doom whose face we are not permitted to see.

“Most vividly among the memories which Mary Clemmer’s name starts, for me — among the recollections of her superb moral courage, her scorn of political corruption, her loyalty to lofty ideals, her fidelity to the soldiers of the Republic, her picturesque style, rich, womanly imagination, sensitive love of Nature, and endless capacity for gilding dull themes with vivacious light — there comes back, with touching distinctness, the vision of her beautiful obituary work.

“How tenderly she treated the weakness and how eagerly she wrote of the power of the dead! How careful she was to recall the forgotten incidents, the

overlooked virtues, to complete her chaplet, tying it so delicately that it might seem to be done by the very fingers of personal love before she laid it down. Who is there to speak of her as she of those who were called before her? So graceful and so gracious a tribute as she was wont to give, we must wish, with all our hearts, that she could receive, now the solemn time has come for her, too, which waits us all, when we no longer may minister to others but only they to us."

The following is a personal tribute from a lady who knew her well and esteemed her greatly. It was written in the autumn of 1884:

"The grass is growing on Mary Clemmer's grave; but all the way to it, and beyond, so far as human love can reach, is covered with flowers.

"Down from the North, and up from the South, and across the Western rivers they have come, unfading blossoms of friendship and love, to mingle with the stainless but perishing emblems that we reverently laid upon her coffin. There is no need for more, almost no room for more; and yet, saying farewell to summer and her together, we who have been near her during these last months pause, and turn; and drop our own home garland at her feet.

"If those who only know her name and pen miss her so, what must it be for us, who step inside

her home, who see her roses blowing on their stems, who feel in all her rooms her own artistic grace, where every book, vase, and pictured face has caught and keeps the memory of some word of hers?

“To miss the gracious presence and the kindly smile, to miss the gentle voice and loving soul, to miss the home she gave us in her heart, — all this, and this through all the years, and only this, is left to us

“But all the shadows fall on our side, none on hers. God her Father and the Universe her home, there was no room for anything but light; and had the choice been left her, — death in the full bloom of life, or slowly failing strength and creeping age, — no one who knew her but could tell which it would be.

“October never fades. The soft opal tints melt away, rich and glowing to the last. We only need to see it once, and remember it forever.

“So will she be remembered down the years, the bloom and glow of full life all about her. We leave her so, a little while at most, and find her so a little further on, and keep her so forever and for aye.”

Among the published notices of her which were especially full of tender feeling or warm regard were those which appeared in the Bos-

ton "Traveller," the Boston "Advertiser," the Boston "Herald," the Boston "Saturday Evening Gazette," the New York "Commercial Advertiser," the Philadelphia "Record," the Philadelphia "Ledger," the Cincinnati "Commercial Gazette," the Chicago "Inter-Ocean," the Chicago "Tribune," the Chicago "Universalist," the New Orleans "Times-Democrat," the Omaha "Excelsior," the Greeley, Colorado, "Tribune," and the Washington "National Tribune." The "Transcript," of North Adams, Massachusetts, contained this striking tribute to her:—

"Among the influences of our time the genius and soul of Mary Clemmer will rank with the first. She wrote with remarkable eloquence, insight, grace, and power, and her words kindled thousands of souls she never knew. She wrought a great work, and our public life is sweeter and nobler, and America breathes freer and deeper, because of the fidelity, love, courage, and genius of this noble woman."

The Boston "Saturday Evening Gazette" said of her:—

“There has been no writer of anything like her ability who confined herself so much to newspaper work. Her composition of this kind was remarkably effective, being sparkling in style, picturesque in its descriptive power, thoroughly womanly in its tone, and alive with sympathy for all that was good and noble. She lived many years in Washington, and knew the city in its public life better than any other of her sex. Her estimates of the public men of the last twenty-five years were remarkably well-considered and appreciative, and she wrote of them with refreshing frankness. A good political history of the period might be made from her letters, many of which deserve reproduction in permanent form. Her poems have long impressed us as among her best work, and far superior to much that has had more popular currency.”

Many tributes by women who were her ardent admirers — those whom she called her “women-lovers” — were published. From one of these signed “E. H.” and printed in the Cincinnati “Commercial Gazette” the following is taken: —

“In Mary Clemmer was found not only the fine and delicate organization of a sensitive woman, the

beauty-loving soul of a poet, the instincts of a house-keeper, but her mind could swing readily to great questions, to political problems, and with masculine force she discussed the party questions of the day. She held as much influence in that soft hand of hers as any ballot could have given her.

“She had convictions, she had honesty; she was fearless to denounce, as she was ready to praise. Men in Washington respected her views; they looked for her opinions, and treated with veneration the gifted woman in her pretty home beside the Capitol door. She was never one to assert her personal privileges, to insist on her rights. She was a woman, — a gentle lady. You did homage to her womanliness first, then accorded her the crown of genius. She was never among the wranglers, — the loud-voiced. She expressed herself forcefully but quietly, and was seldom denied a hearing.

“How little I have said! how poorly said it! Yet were I to write on forever I would not be satisfied with my words. She is gone, and I loved her. How then can I say what I would? Grief is ever incoherent; longing is always blinding. What can I say above the coffin of my friend? Who could tell but in snatches, and in broken words, the loveliness and loss of the departed? And shall we answer to ourselves the meaning of the suddenly arrested work of Mary Clemmer?

“There is a little poem she wrote in earlier years

— a yellow, discolored slip, — that lies before me.
With it I will close my imperfect words : —

“ ‘ Weighted we walk through this weary world,
The wings of our souls too weak to rise ;
Under our burdens we feel them furled,
As we yearning gaze toward the far-off skies.

“ ‘ Mine eyes gaze deep into human eyes
To read the sibylline lines of fate,
The stories of dwarfed and thwarted lives ;
I see their shadow and feel their weight.

“ ‘ Come unto me, ye laden ones,’
Saith the Lord, ‘ I will give you rest ;’
Why under His rising and setting suns
So many walk weighted, He knoweth best.

“ ‘ When shall we cast our weights aside ?
When shall we gather the strength to rise ?
And the beautiful spirit, lightened, glide
Into the gates of Paradise ?’ ”

In his fine and eloquent statement of the considerations which may support a rational and intelligent belief in a new life after the death that ends all here, Mr. Edwin Arnold says :

“ Birth gave to each of us much ; death may give very much more in the way of subtler senses to

behold colors we cannot here see, to catch sounds we do not now hear, and to be aware of bodies and objects impalpable at present to us, but perfectly real, intelligibly constructed, and constituting an organized society and a governed, multiform state. Where does Nature show signs of breaking off her magic, that she should stop at the five organs and the sixty odd elements? Are we free to spread over the face of this little earth, and never free to spread through the solar system and beyond it? Nay, the heavenly bodies are to the ether which contains them as mere spores of seaweed floating in the ocean. Are the specks only filled with life, and not the space? What does Nature possess more valuable in all she has wrought here, than the wisdom of the sage, the tenderness of the mother, the devotion of the lover, and the opulent imagination of the poet, that she should let these priceless things be utterly lost by a quinsy or a flux? It is a hundred times more reasonable to believe that she commences afresh with such delicately developed treasures, making them groundwork and stuff for splendid farther living, by process of death, which, even when it seems accidental or premature, is probably as natural and gentle as birth; and wherefrom, it may well be, the new-born dead arises to find a fresh world ready for his pleasant and novel body, with gracious and willing kindred ministrations awaiting it like those which provided for the human babe the guarding

arms and nourishing breasts of its mother. . . . Man is less superior to the sensitive-plant now than his re-embodied spirit would probably then be to his present personality. Nor does anything except ignorance and despondency forbid the belief that the senses so etherealized and enhanced, and so fitly adapted to the fine combinations of advanced entity, would discover without much amazement sweet and friendly societies springing from but proportionately upraised above the old associations ; art divinely elevated ; science splendidly expanding ; bygone loves and sympathies explaining and obtaining their purpose ; activities set free for vaster cosmic service ; abandoned hopes realized at last ; despaired-of joys come magically within ready reach ; regrets and repentances softened by wider knowledge, surer foresight, and the discovery that though in this universe nothing can be ' forgiven,' everything may be repaid and repaired."

These are comforting words. If they be not true, then all human life is a mockery. Such a life as that of Mary Clemmer, it must be, meets its reward and its renewal beyond the grave. It was with such a faith as this of Arnold's that in one of the numerous poems in which she expressed a prevision of the future life, she wrote :

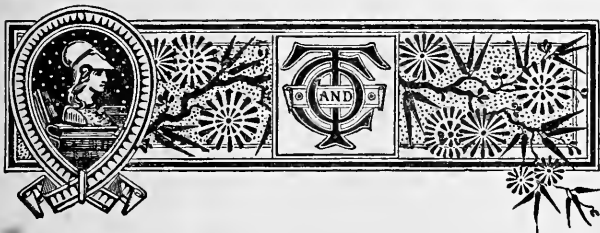
“ I wait,
Till in white death’s tranquillity
Shall softly fall away from me
This weary life’s infirmity ;
That I, in larger light, may learn
The larger truth I would discern,
The larger love for which I yearn.

“ I wait !
The summer of the soul is long,
Its harvests yet shall round me throng
In perfect pomp of sun and song.
In stormless mornings yet to be,
I’ll pluck from life’s full-fruited tree
The joy to-day denied to me.”

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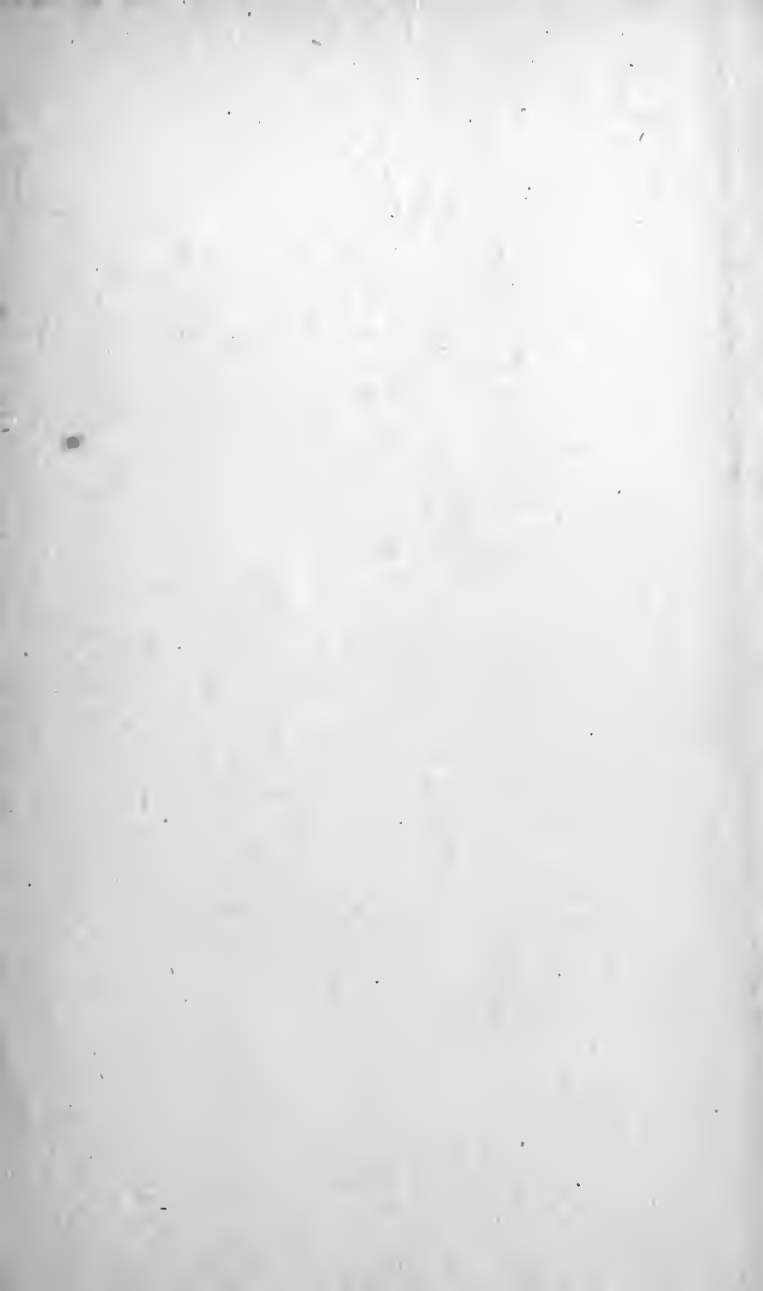
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